Storied Island

New Explorations in Javanese Literature

Edited by

Ronit Ricci

BRILL

KITLV

Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

Storied Island

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
A.L. (Pete) Becker (1932–2011)
M.C. Ricklefs (1943–2019)
in gratitude for their inspiration, which lives on

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Bringing this volume to completion took longer than expected due to the global pandemic and its aftermath, so it is truly a pleasure to now finally be able to acknowledge and thank those who offered support along the way. First and foremost, the authors are grateful to the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies for hosting the "New Directions in the Study of Javanese Literature" research group during the 2018–2019 academic year. We thank the Institute's Director Yitzhak Hen, the Administrative Director Iris Avivi and the entire staff for making our stay both productive and very enjoyable.

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Above all, it has been the mutual support, generosity and friendship amongst our research group's members that have made working on this volume a most valuable experience.

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A Note on Orthography and Transliteration

The sources cited and discussed in this book span several places, periods, and languages. Orthographic variation was very much the norm for much of the period covered, and variation also occurred when the same words were spelled across scripts.

Questions pertaining to the relationships between languages and the cultural capital and historical echoes they carry are pertinent to the work of many of the authors in this volume, e.g., where and on what basis, in the context of Javanese literature, do we draw a "dividing line" between languages and their repository of words? Where does Arabic "end" and Javanese "begin"? Is standardization desirable or is it an imposition as, for example, when Arabic diacritics or long vowels are added to Indonesian words to "correct" them? These are not merely technical matters, yet in the end, editorial decisions about spelling and transliteration must be made and for the sake of convenience and consistency the following is applied throughout the volume:

I have attempted to retain the original spelling as much as possible, therefore words used in both Javanese and Malay or modern Indonesian are spelled according to the context in which they are discussed or quoted (e.g., *pĕsantren* in Javanese, *pesantren* in Indonesian). When citing secondary works that used an older form of spelling, it was left as is.

For Javanese, I have opted for a consistent usage of <ĕ> rather than <ê> or <e> for *pĕpĕt* and <e> rather than <é> or <è> for *taling*, including in the names of people, places, and literary works. Any exceptions to this are explained in the relevant footnotes.

For Arabic, transliteration follows the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, using full diacritical marks.

Loanwords commonly used in English (e.g., Muhammad, Qur'an, imam, gamelan), are spelled according to English convention.

When citing manuscripts, the available information, often incomplete, is given in the first citation. Non-English terminology is italicized on first appearance only. Capitalization and punctuation have sometimes been added to Javanese citations and their translations in order to make them more legible to the reader.

Abbreviations

Manuscript Collections, Archives, and Publishers

BL	British Library
EAP	Endangered Archives Programme
KS	Karaton Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia
Cod. Or.	Leiden University Library, The Netherlands
MN	Reksa Pustaka Library, Kadipaten Mangkunagaran, Surakarta, Indonesia
PP	Kadipaten Pura Pakualaman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
RP	Radya Pustaka Museum, Surakarta, Indonesia

Journals

BKI	*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*
TBG	*Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde*
VKI	*Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*

Languages

Ar.	Arabic
D.	Dutch
J.	Javanese
M.	Malay
Skt.	Sanskrit

MAP 1 The Republic of Indonesia and neighboring countries

MAP 2 The island of Java, Indonesia

Introduction

Ronit Ricci

Abstract

Javanese literature is one of the world's richest and most unusual literary traditions, yet it is little known today outside of Java, Indonesia, and a handful of western universities. With its more than a millennium of documented history, its complex interactions over the centuries with literatures written in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Malay, and Dutch, its often-symbiotic relationship with the performing arts of puppetry and dance, and its own immense creativity and insight, this vastly understudied literature offers a lens to understanding Java's fascinating world, as well as human ingenuity more broadly. The Introduction briefly explores the history of the field. It also introduces the essays in this volume which take a fresh look at questions and themes pertaining to Java's literature, employing new theoretical and methodological lenses.

Keywords

Javanese literature – translation – Islamic literature – performing arts – Indonesia

Javanese literature is one of the world's richest and most unusual literary traditions, yet it is little known today outside of Java, Indonesia, and a handful of western universities. With its more than a millennium of documented history, its complex interactions over the centuries with literatures written in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Malay, and Dutch, its often-symbiotic relationship with the performing arts of puppetry and dance, and its own immense creativity and insight, this vastly understudied literature offers a lens to understanding Java's fascinating world, as well as human ingenuity more broadly. The essays in this volume take a fresh look at questions and themes pertaining to Java's literature, employing new theoretical and methodological lenses.

Javanese is the language of the largest Muslim ethnolinguistic group in the world and the largest ethnic group in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, currently spoken by approximately 100 million people. Javanese literature is typically divided into three broad periods: Old Javanese, Middle Javanese, and Modern Javanese, the first and last of which are somewhat better defined although their borders, too, remain porous and imprecise. Modern Javanese works, the focus

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of this volume, are defined as those containing Arabic loanwords, and written in indigenous, non-Sanskritic meters and in prose from the sixteenth century onwards, a period which marked Java's gradual transition to Islam (Pigeaud 1967). These works encompass a wide range of topics and genres including, among others, historical narratives ranging from the local to the cosmic, mystical poetry, didactic literature for princes and women, prophecies, meditations on language, tales of adventure and romance, and novels (Arps and Gallop 1991; Quinn 1992; Florida 2000; Saktimulya 2005).

Modern Javanese literature also encompasses legal and religious treatises, some of which were written in the form of interlinear translation, with an Arabic original appearing widely spaced on the page and translated word for word into Javanese, opening a window to the lexical and grammatical decisions made by translators and to the emergence of particular intellectual traditions (Umam 2013; Ricci 2016). Javanese texts of the modern period were written in the traditional, India-derived script (known as *aksara Jawa*), in a modified Arabic script (*pegon* or *gundhul*), and in Romanized form, thus raising questions about script-related choices, hierarchies, and affiliations (Ricci 2015). The majority of extant pre-twentieth century Javanese literature is in the form of manuscripts, kept in royal repositories, state libraries, and private collections in Indonesia, as well as in libraries in Leiden, London, and elsewhere. The vast majority of this literature has never been subject to scholarly attention.

The modern academic study of Javanese as it developed from the early nineteenth century onwards in the metropole and the colony – The Netherlands and Java, respectively – was firmly grounded in the field of philology. Javanese texts were studied and edited with emphasis put on questions of dating, provenance, authorship, and content (Raffles 1817; Pijper 1924; Hooykaas 1955). The issue of originality often emerged: since many of the texts studied seemed familiar yet different to European scholars reading them – prime examples include Javanese retellings of the Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the *Sĕrat Ambiya*, tales of the early Muslim prophets – Javanese authors were often seen as interpolators or incapable translators, deviating from the "authentic" texts they were transmitting. Only gradually did an understanding develop that such "borrowed" works did not express an inability to translate "faithfully" or a disregard for content or style. Rather, their retelling on Java represented significant processes of adaptation, localization, and creativity that in turn spoke to broader societal and cultural transformations, including the Islamization of the Indonesian archipelago and responses to a growing European presence and colonialism. Recent scholarship has thus expanded the range of questions asked and disciplinary perspectives taken, seeking to understand Javanese literature on its own terms, as well as to explore its historical,

religious, and artistic contexts (Florida 1995; Behrend 1999; Ricklefs 1998; Ricci 2011; Arps 2016; Bogaerts 2016; Ming and van der Molen 2018; Sugahara and van der Molen 2018; Wieringa 2019; Sastrawan 2020; Day 2021; Meyer 2021).

Despite such attempts and the interest several prominent mid–late twentieth-century intellectuals took in Java (including Benedict Anderson and Clifford Geertz, who made seminal contributions to political science and anthropology, respectively, with their writings on Java), the field of Javanese Studies has been gradually shrinking. One dimension crucial to understanding the field's predicament in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the rise of Bahasa Indonesia as the unifying language of the Indonesian independence movement and the post-colonial state which, although considered a remarkable success on many fronts, has significantly marginalized the role played by Javanese in the private and public spheres in Indonesia and beyond. On the other hand, large-scale digitization projects – like the ones taking place at the British Library, the Endangered Archives Programme, Leiden University library and DREAMSEA – and the unparalleled database sastra.org, mean that Javanese manuscripts are more widely available for reading and research than ever before.

This volume is based on work conducted by an international group of scholars over ten months during a residency at the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (2018–19). The official title of the project was "New Directions in the Study of Javanese Literature," but more casually, and reflecting how unexpected the location of carrying out research on this particular topic seemed, we came to be known as the "Java in Jerusalem" group. Those in the field of Javanese Studies are often quite alone in their respective institutions, therefore the opportunity to hold joint reading sessions and seminars and to engage in daily hallway conversations about this or that idea, a word that defied translation, or a missing historical detail, felt most welcome. The productive exchange of ideas, the many conversations we had, and the collaborative spirit of those months shaped the following pages, as well as the group's already-published Reader, a collection of selected passages from a range of Javanese texts with translation and brief essays (Bogaerts and Day 2021).[1]

Storied Island has three aims: first, to present analyses of texts not studied to date, a basic but indispensable prerequisite for our ability to better generalize and theorize; second, to reassess texts studied by earlier generations of

1 The Reader's emphasis is on close readings of textual selections from a range of Javanese writings, with each contribution presenting a text and translation with short commentary, while the essays in this volume encompass more expansive explorations into many of those same texts, and others, considering method and theory and links among texts.

scholars while employing in their analysis theoretical paradigms previously untapped in the field and knowledge from adjoining areas including religious studies, performance, and cultural studies; third, and based on the first two goals, to broadly rethink major dimensions of the field, including periodization, contextualization, literary categorizations, and interpretive methods.[2]

Past volumes on Javanese literature, including the indispensable scholarship of Zoetmulder (1974, 1995), Poerbatjaraka (1957) and Pigeaud (1967–70), tended to be arranged chronologically and offered synopses of multiple works. While certainly standing on the shoulders of our predecessors and owing them a great debt for their groundbreaking, meticulous and erudite writings, the present volume does not follow that path, but rather engages with texts using particular theoretical or thematic perspectives. It is exploratory in nature, aiming to expand the horizons of Javanese studies in new directions.

The chapters are diverse in the sources and methods they employ but also speak to one another, with key themes emerging, several of which will be mentioned here. A reconsideration of Islam as represented textually across time and genre is common to many of the chapters (Ricklefs, Day, Florida, Arps, Sugahara, Ricci, Meyer, Bogaerts). In fact, almost all authors touch upon this theme in one way or another, validating Ricklefs' overarching claim in chapter 1 of a paradigm shift in how Islam is understood within Javanese studies; several chapters present new insights on, and interpretations of, Javanese writing genres and the possible links amongst them. For example, what did it mean to write a "life story" in Javanese? Can the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* and Ambiya texts be viewed as forms of biography (of Sultan Agung and the prophets, respectively), and can they be considered as precedents for Raden Sasrakusuma's late nineteenth century autobiography? Chapters on epic (Arps), the shifting definitions of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* (Day), *suluk* (Florida, Meyer), *pitutur* (Sugahara), and "tales" (as in Panji Tales, van der Molen) engage with generic questions and with the challenges of "relocating" genre into a new context in which it is discussed in English – with its categories and historical echoes – rather than in Javanese.

Furthermore, there are reassessments of important works in the field, both primary sources (Day and Florida on the Cĕnthini, Arps on *Caritanira Amir*, Ricci on Sĕrat Ambiya, Meyer on the *Seh Malaya*) and secondary ones (Sugahara's rereading of Drewes' analysis of a sixteenth century text, Ricklefs

2 I wish to acknowledge the research group members who were unable to write chapters but whose contributions to the group's work were significant: George Quinn, Siti Muslifah, and the late Opan Safari.

on a range of early scholarship), as well as engagements with texts that have been little or barely studied to date (Bogaerts on Sĕrat Babad Nitik, van der Molen on *Panji Paniba*, Wieringa on *Lalakone Raden Sasrakusuma*); some chapters engage with textual topics and dimensions hardly addressed thus far, including affect (Arps, with a broad range of emotional representation discussed also by Bogaerts and Ricci), sex (Day, Wieringa), scientific technology (Meyer), and political allegory (van der Molen, Bogaerts); the chapters by Arps, Day, Bogaerts and Florida bring out the profound importance of vocal and aural dimensions of reading, of texts' performative incarnations, and of Javanese texts' relationships to the art forms of music, dance, painting and puppetry, highlighting how texts are often only "fully realized" if these dimensions are taken into consideration; the ongoing presence of Old Javanese sensibilities in an Islamic Java (Arps, van der Molen) is an important theme that awaits much further research.

Temporal and spatial dimensions take various forms in the works explored. One way in which Javanese texts speak to the past, present, and sometimes the future, is by employing the same figures, or echoes or shadows of these figures' lives, in texts inscribed at different moments in time. For an example, we might look to the well-known story about Sunan Kalijaga, a prominent Javanese wali, taking part in building the first Javanese mosque in Demak and orienting the mosques in Demak and Mecca towards one another. A link between Sunan Kalijaga and an important Muslim figure, going backwards in time, is found in Ricci's chapter depicting an Ambiya episode in which the building of the first Meccan mosque by nabi Ibrahim echoes Sunan Kalijaga's role in the erection of the Demak mosque: in both cases a slab of stone, or pillar, was missing in order to complete the task and it was ultimately found; then, moving forward rather than backward in time from Kalijaga's era, Meyer in her chapter asks how the episode of Sunan Kalijaga calibrating the two foundational mosques continues to reverberate in Ahmad Dahlan's twentieth century biography, when he led a movement to re-align the *kiblat* of Javanese Muslims in prayer. These different yet linked episodes point to overlapping temporalities – and also to the figure of Sunan Kalijaga as a kind of pillar within Javano-Islamic literary and cultural tradition, holding up connections to the early Islamic past and also futuristic ones to Indonesia's Muhammadiyah.

The writing of the Sĕrat Babad Nitik in Yogyakarta in the 1870s was commissioned by the Ratu Agĕng to retell the life of Sultan Agung, a great king and warrior of the past, while directing his example at her son, the future ruler Haměngku Buwana VII; in the Panji Paniba a tale with elements adopted from the ancient Ramayana epic speaks to contemporary political circumstances and imagines, or prophesizes, a better future for Java.

An attunement to space is found in many of the texts and the analyses that accompany them: Raden Sasrakusuma's movement along the road of career and family, the travels of wandering *santri* across Java's landscape depicted in the Cĕnthini, Amir Hamza's many adventurous journeys, Sultan Agung's movement between palace and war and the abode of Nyai Lara Kidul, Queen of the Southern Seas, Panji's search for the princess and the juxtaposition of the "here" of Java and the "there" of Makassar. There is also the theme of an inner space of the heart of the one traversing the path, touched by Sufi songs (Florida), and an inner Mecca that requires no distant travels but only a believer's true realization (Meyer). A central spatial question, tying back to the theme of Islamization, can be phrased as "where is Java?," a question that seems self-evident but which several of the chapters show is not so, by engaging with Javanese concerns about center and periphery, marginality, localization, and the layered spaces of Javanese writing, memory, and imagination.

There are three related, yet not entirely overlapping, aspects of many of the texts discussed in this volume which often seemed to take center stage in reading sessions and discussions. First, Javanese narrative texts tend to be expansive and exuberant: in descriptive detail, in the number of characters, in affect, and of course, in the employment of language. The latter exuberance comes through in translated passages scattered throughout the volume, many of them rendered in English for the first time. Textual expansion and improvisation constitute yet another way in which writing in Java is linked with the arts, as Day aptly points out, reading two Cĕnthini scenes within the framework of gamelan music: "What happens in the two vignettes, to choose another analogy, is like the *ciblon* section of a *gĕndhing*, when the intervals between the notes played by instruments that carry the basic melody expand, allowing various other instruments to fill those sonic spaces with creative, often highly individualistic improvisations on the basic melody."

Second, there seems to be a certain interchangeability of characters, tropes, and roles in Javanese literature of different periods and genres, as if there was a vast pool of motifs somewhere on which poets could draw, whether writing a Panji tale, a story of the Islamic prophets or heroes, a Nitik text, another Ramayana, a book of Islamic instruction, a suluk, or a memoire. Third, the echoes or shadows brought about by such movement of characters and scenes and tropes creates a web of connections we usually call "intertextuality" – but the term seems by now overused, worn and insufficient. In some ways, this phenomenon seems at present almost trivial to us, and it has been commented on extensively in many contexts, but is there more we can say? There is a phenomenon here that pervades the texts, and performances, that brings them

alive across time, genre, and religion, whether or not we have the precise word to capture what it is.

Very briefly, several more themes that are explored by the following chapters are authority and power across periods and contexts as represented and claimed within texts; Java in the "long nineteenth century": palace, *pěsantren*, school, village, forest; considering the roles of characters, especially minor ones, and characterization; locating and situating texts in their relation to particular places; and, to express many of these more broadly, thinking anew about relationships: between word and image, between major and minor characters, between text and place, between Java and Indian civilization, Java and the Middle East, between text and generic classification, between the reader and the textual world she enters through slow, close reading.

What has been suggested here does not exhaust the range of themes that emerge in and across chapters. We hope readers will find points of interest and connections that are meaningful to them as they travel the pages ahead.

Finally, as is the case with every piece of writing, the current authors are located in the present moment, with its particular concerns and blind spots. Such concerns might include, among other topics, the history of emotions, global Islamic studies, microhistory and the study of everyday life, performance studies, and gender. Our blind spots may be even more pronounced than those of scholars working in other fields because so few conduct research on Javanese literature, both in Indonesia and elsewhere, and many, many texts remain to be studied. Be that as it may, there is no end point to studying Javanese literature. Rather, the subject of inquiry itself changes as time goes by, examined through the eyes of researchers and students and other audiences whose lives are grounded in particular circumstances. One dimension of studying Javanese literature is studying how it was studied in different periods and places, and why, and how the changing emphases (e.g., past discussions of "interpolation," "syncretism," "Indianization"; how the Cěnthini has been studied and classified over time) have shaped the knowledge and ways of seeing we have inherited. Breaking free of those, or even adding nuance and depth, are no less challenging than reading intricate Javanese verses. Therefore, this volume seeks both to offer new insights that have become possible in our own day and age *and* to remain aware that we, too, are not offering a definitive, omniscient vantage point. The authors aim to provide new directions for further exploration and analysis within the field and also beyond it, as the themes, methodologies, and theoretical angles presented in the essays are relevant to scholars working on similar questions in other regions and cultural contexts. To this end, the chapters were written with both specialist and non-specialist

readers in mind and the volume includes an extended glossary of Javanese terms. Most of all, the authors hope the volume will be received as a starting point to further debate, conversation, research, and reflection on the remarkable literature of the storied island of Java.

1 The Chapters in Brief

The **opening chapter** of the volume is by the late Merle Ricklefs, whose life's work on Javanese history and literature embodies (among other things) the importance of attunement to the Javanese sources and what they convey about the past, encouraging an openness to paradigm shifts, including in relation to a question as fundamental to Javanese studies as the process of Islamization. Reminding us how powerfully the interests and blind spots of the present shape our views of the past, Ricklefs traces the seminal change in the field from the legacy of viewing Islam as marginal to Javanese culture to the more recent interpretation of considering it as a topic of major significance in the history of the Javanese. The chapter sets the stage for a theme that runs through the majority of the volume's chapters, which is how Islam – its history and contemporary manifestations, its pull, major figures, poetic and pietistic traditions – is represented and engaged with textually across time and genre.

The authors of the next two chapters, Tony Day and Nancy Florida, return to the Sĕrat Cĕnthini, a text read and studied by generations of scholars, to examine it from new angles. Both note that the Cĕnthini has been one of the most admired, yet little read works of nineteenth century Javanese literature, thus touching on the larger question in contemporary Java of little actual engagement with Javanese texts, combined with a sense of awe and particular ideas about what such literature contains and means. Day's focus in **chapter 2** is on aspects of the Cĕnthini's literary composition. Curiously, these have been for the most part neglected in the scholarship, which has tended to view the long narrative poem as an encyclopedic work on all things Javanese despite its linguistic and literary richness. Day pays close attention to characterization, especially to "minor characters." The study of characterization, as the chapter shows, is key to our understanding of religious and political thinking in early nineteenth century Java as well as to gaining a better grasp of how literary narratives in Java have been created and what they mean. Furthermore, Day suggests, their study will make it possible to situate the poem as literature on a continuum extending from ancient Javanese *kakawin* to novels written by Javanese authors in both Javanese and Indonesian in the modern period.

Nancy Florida, in **chapter 3**, begins with a depiction of the Muslim cleric and artist Mustofa Bisri's painting of the controversial dangdut dancer Inul, surrounded by a circle of ulama performing *zikir* (remembrance of God), wondering if he was inspired by "memory shadows" of earlier, now mostly erased practices of the devotional performances of suluk in song and dance in rural Java that combined ideas about and practices of mind and body that were believed to advance man's path to God. Closely reading several passages from the Cĕnthini that depict such scenes, Florida highlights the centrality of the idea of embodied spirit to Javanese Sufis at the time and shows how crucially important within the Javanese world of Islam was the cultural element, with the suluk understood as the best way to reach and to touch the believers' hearts. She also argues for the need to finally put aside views about Javanese Islam as being "lesser," "marginal," or "partial," ideas that have been powerful and influential for far too long.

In **chapter 4**, Bernard Arps takes a new look at the Islamic epic of Amir Hamza which constituted the major epic of Islam in Asia until the early twentieth century. The epic, which was widely popular around the Java Sea, was studied by earlier scholars including van Ronkel and Poerbatjaraka, but has received little attention since. The focus of the chapter is on what Arps terms the "Hamza Affect," an overarching tendency in this epic (but one that can be detected also in other South and Southeast Asian epics) to prioritize feelings, emotions, moods, and sentiments as forces that structure the epic and propel it forward. The emphasis on affect is not limited to written texts but is central also to performance, and the chapter exemplifies this fact by offering depictions of three Amir Hamza puppetry performances over recent decades. By bringing together written sources and performative traditions, Arps highlights the interconnectedness of these realms to Javanese culture, ones that too often have been studied in isolation.

Yumi Sugahara in **chapter 5** revisits a classic in the field of Javanese studies, Drewes' 1969 published text and translation of one of the earliest surviving Javanese manuscripts, to which he gave the title "The Admonitions of Seh Bari." The text, previously published by Schrieke in 1916 and attributed to the famous wali Sunan Bonang, is a valuable source of information on Islamic doctrine in sixteenth century Java. Acknowledging the challenges of trying to contextualize such an early text and the many gaps in our understanding of the period, Sugahara nonetheless explores it in an attempt to shed light on several points of doctrine apparently current at the time, to consider the meaning of the text's attribution to Sunan Bonang, as well as to raise broader questions about the use of the term "Sufism" in our studies of early Islam in Java.

In **chapter 6** Ronit Ricci investigates one of Java's most popular (yet again, like the Cĕnthini and Hamza epic, little studied) textual traditions, the Sĕrat Ambiya. These "Tales of the Prophets," which appear in numerous manuscripts inscribed in palaces and villages, in poetry and prose and in various scripts, depict the lives of the many prophets of Islam leading up to Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets. In the chapter Ricci examines two manuscripts produced in the mid-nineteenth century Javanese pĕsantren milieu, focusing on scenes in which, she suggests, the life of an Ambiya figure echoes with that of a Javanese wali. Thus, for example, the episode of nabi Ibrahim constructing the first mosque in Mecca shares much with the well-known story of Sunan Kalijaga's role in the erection of Java's first mosque in Demak. Hence the chapter points to a "wali-Ambiya interface" through which two great Islamic traditions – those of the walis and nabis – were intertwined and mutually constituted in major Javano-Islamic pedagogical settings.

In **chapter 7**, Verena Meyer asks what thinking about kiblat alignments (turning towards Mecca in prayer) in Java, by two figures as different as Sunan Kalijaga and Muhammadiyah's founder Ahmad Dahlan, tells us about understandings of religion and space? About perceptions of center and periphery? Drawing on historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith's claim that religious understandings of place are characterized by a conflict between two opposing senses, a "locative" and a "utopian" vision of the world, she considers, through a reading of the story of Seh Malaya, how the Javanese have negotiated their distance, geographic and otherwise, from the traditional center of the Muslim world, and how the view from the margins, so to speak, in fact shows that the meaning of Mecca, of the center, is not always self-evident, not always the same. "Where is Mecca" and "where is Java" are questions to be asked in tandem. Such an understanding, Meyer suggests, complicates and even collapses the difference between the two senses of space and the dichotomies of center and periphery, inner and outer, here and there.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to Els Bogaerts' study of the Sĕrat Babad Nitik corpus, depicting the life and deeds of the seventeenth century Sultan Agung, another Javanese textual tradition that has yet to receive due attention. Bogaerts' emphasis is on the text's modes of referentiality (in particular the use of credible, trustworthy sources) and their multiple aims. She shows that these modes are used to build credence so as to convince the audiences of the stories of Sultan Agung's prominence, to claim the authenticity of the tales, and to authorize the telling. They also demonstrate that the representation of the past in the Sĕrat Babad Nitik is based on tradition, both oral and written. Bogaerts makes the point that there are different modes of listening to Javanese texts and that familiarity of the audience with many of the stories

woven into the Nitik likely led to a particular kind of attention paid. Further to this, she expands on the importance of the vocal and aural dimensions of reading, its performative aspects, and the way a text only fully comes through if these aspects are taken into account. The chapter also considers the relationship between the choice of past events and figures to appear in the text and contemporary events, highlighting the way Javanese texts often speak both to the past and present, as well as the future.

In **chapter 9**, Willem van der Molen presents a little-known Panji tale, the early nineteenth century Panji Paniba, which includes a scene highly reminiscent of the one depicting Sita's desire for the golden deer in the Ramayana (in the Panji Paniba the deer is replaced by a dove, Sita by princess Sekartaji). Taking this scene as his point of departure, van der Molen asks to what ends did the Javanese poet insert a variation of the famous scene, what might it have signified to the audience? Step-by-step, by way of elaborating on particular characters and scenes, the chapter puts forward an argument for the Panji world of figures and events representing in fictional form contemporary tensions and developments in colonial Java, ones that could not be expressed openly by the Javanese under tightening Dutch rule. This interpretation, in which, for example, a Javano-Makassarese war stands for Javano-Dutch enmity, points to Javanese texts of the period as sites of resistance and the imagining of alternative futures.

Last but not least, Edwin Wieringa in **chapter 10** introduces the so-called autobiography of the writer and schoolteacher Raden Sasrakusuma (b. 1848). "So-called" because rethinking generic classifications and how, why, and by whom they have been employed in the study of Javanese literature, is central to Wieringa's discussion and with it, the even wider question of whether "literature" has been employed far too broadly for Javanese writing. Wieringa stresses the need to seek the models such categorization was based on, and to ask how such models were tied to provenance and collecting histories. As he notes, it cannot be emphasized enough that we only know about Sasrakusuma's reminiscences (written as a private family document) because one Dutchman, namely Hendrik Kraemer, happened to be interested in it. This makes crystal clear the power of the few, sometimes of just a single well-known scholar (and outsider) to determine an entire tradition, especially in a small field of study. The question of the naming of literary categories is also raised, beginning with the phrase *lalakone Raden Sasrakusuma*, in which the word *lělakon*, which possesses a semantic range that includes "life aim," "role," moral responsibility, and "destiny," is translated as "biography" or "autobiography," pointing to the challenges of naming, defining, and understanding writing categories in translation. Wieringa's analysis of Sasrakusuma's text and of its reading by

earlier scholars also bring out an oft-employed overemphasis on "European influence" and highlights the challenge of disentangling what was indeed such and what just looked that way, e.g., Sasrakusuma's use of very complex time reckoning systems suggests, contrary to popular scholarly belief, that caring about time was not a new and European idea adopted by the Javanese. The chapter thus challenges scholars in the present to balance a reliance on the work of our predecessors with a striving to make histories of collecting, naming, and classifying more accessible and transparent for the sake of more nuanced knowledge.

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CHAPTER 1

Rediscovering Islam in Javanese History

M.C. Ricklefs

Abstract

The study of Javanese history offers significant examples of both legacies and new interpretations which have transformed how we see the past and present circumstances of the Javanese over the centuries of Islamisation and, consequently, how we might imagine their future. Not so very long ago, Islam tended to be viewed as marginal to 'mainstream' Javanese culture: that was the legacy. Now we see it as a topic of major significance in the history of the Javanese: that is the new interpretation. In this chapter, we will look at both the legacy and the new understanding, to see how we have been led to new views of Javanese history, society and culture and to a clearer understanding of how Islam is understood and lived in the real world.

This examination of both the legacy and the new interpretations of Javanese history provides us with a fine example of how our views of the past are often shaped by our experience of the present. It also reminds us how beguiling, misleading and analytically dangerous stereotypes can be and how important it is actually to do research to test such ideas. These are hardly new observations, of course, but it is rather remarkable how hard it has been to arrive at them in the case of the history of the Javanese.

Keywords

Islamic history – Java – Islamisation

The study of Javanese history offers significant examples of both legacies and new interpretations, which have transformed how we see the past and present circumstances of the Javanese over the centuries of Islamization and, consequently, how we might imagine their future.[1] Not so very long ago, Islam

1 This is a republication, with slight variations, of a paper published with the same title in *Studia Islamika* 21.3 (2014): 399–418. That was based on a keynote lecture given at the August 2014 conference in Jakarta celebrating 20 years of the journal *Studia Islamika*, which was focused on the theme "Southeast Asian Islam: Legacy and New Interpretation."

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tended to be viewed as marginal to "mainstream" Javanese culture: that was the legacy. Now we see it as a topic of major significance in the history of the Javanese: that is the new interpretation. In this chapter, we will look at both the legacy and the new understanding, to see how we have been led to new views of Javanese history, society, and culture and to a clearer understanding of how Islam is understood and lived in the real world.

This examination of both the legacy and the new interpretation of Javanese history provides us with a fine example of how our views of the past are often shaped by our experience of the present. It also reminds us how beguiling, misleading, and analytically dangerous stereotypes can be and how important it is actually to do research to test such ideas. These are hardly new observations, of course, but it is rather remarkable how hard it has been to arrive at them in the case of the history of the Javanese.

1 The Legacy

In some older literature we find the idea that there were two quite distinct cultural realms which could be distinguished from each other. One was the Islamic realm, defined by essentializing stereotypes of which we'll see examples below. The depiction of Islam's social practices was perhaps influenced by images of the Wahhabi Islam of Saudi Arabia, while that of its theology tended to be dominated by the views of educated, intellectual Modernists. If most Javanese didn't fit those images, it seems, they weren't proper Muslims.

For their part, the Javanese were also frequently seen through essentializing lenses. The lifestyle of nominally Muslim *abangan* was seen as authentically Javanese, as the norm. There was a saying that an abangan only observed the obligations of Islam four times in her or his life: at birth, at circumcision, at marriage, and at death, and on the first, second and last of these someone else had to do it for them. The style of the *kratons* was taken as a defining paradigm of this authentic but only nominally Islamic culture and society. The *priyayi* represented the sophisticated upper class of this authentically Javanese style.

We must take care not to exaggerate in our discussion of these legacy views. There was some very fine scholarship done in the past to which we are all indebted. But there was also a fairly dominant overarching paradigm which is evident in much of that scholarship. It is that which is now challenged by both new research and changing contemporary circumstances.

A prominent example of the legacy stereotypes was in a famous essay on "The world of Southeast Asia: 1500–1650," written by J.C. van Leur. He was a fine young Dutch scholar who was interested in history and much influenced

by Max Weber's sociology. His career was cut tragically short when he was killed in the battle of the Java Sea in February 1942, at the age of just 34. This essay was written before the war and only published in full in 1947, with an English translation appearing in 1955.

It is important to note that Van Leur's views were formed in the 1930s, in the midst of a period of social, cultural, religious, and political polarization in Java (Ricklefs 2007), which presumably influenced his historical views. In his essay is found a statement that now seems quite remarkable but which, at the time, was regarded as definitive:

> The expansion of the new religion [by which he meant Islam] did not result in any revolutions or any newly arrived foreign colonists coming to power – the Indonesian regime did not undergo a single change due to it. … Nor is there any question of a deeper influence of a cultural sort. Islam did not bring a single innovation of a "higher level of development" to Indonesia, socially or economically, either in state polity or in trade. Both these religions [i.e., Hinduism and Islam] were only a thin, easily flaking glaze on the massive body of indigenous civilization. (van Leur 1955: 168–9)

In 1953–4, an American anthropological research team from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology spent several months in the town of Pare, near Kediri in East Java, which they dubbed "Modjokuto." The most famous person in this team was Clifford Geertz (1926–2006), whose book *The Religion of Java* was published in 1960. There were Indonesian and Dutch critics of the book from the beginning (e.g., Koentjaraningrat 1963) and it was burdened with an embarrassing Javanese blunder in its dedication,[2] but it nevertheless came to be widely regarded as an authoritative account of Javanese religious life. Its influence in Indonesia was also profound, so much so that the collective terms more commonly used for pious Muslims and religious officials among Javanese – *Muslimin*, *putihan*, *kaum*, etc. – were replaced in general usage by the term *santri* which Geertz used but which had usually applied more specifically to students at religious schools (*pĕsantren*).[3]

2 The book is dedicated to "the Wedono, the Modin, and my *abangan* Landlord: *Nuwun Pangestunipun Sedaya Kalepatan Kula*," which asks these persons to bless all of Geertz's mistakes. What he meant to say was *nuwun pangapuntĕn*: please forgive.

3 The use of the term santri for a wider social group was not entirely unprecedented. See Ota 2006: 183 n. 47; Ricklefs 2007: 49, 248.

The timing of the MIT study was important, for Geertz and his team were present in East Java in a period of seriously escalating political, religious, and social tension. The violent events of the Revolutionary period and the politicized environment of the 1950s stimulated increasing polarization in Java. Eventually, those tensions gave rise to the mass violence of the mid-1960s (Ricklefs 2012: ch. 4).

In Geertz's *Religion of Java* we encounter his well-known trichotomy of santri (devout Muslims), abangan (nominal Muslims) and priyayi (elite). The first he associated with the world of small traders, the second with the peasantry, and the third with the bureaucracy, which Koentjaraningrat called "oversimplified" (Koentjaraningrat 1963: 188). This trichotomy became a common way to depict the divisions within Javanese society, despite its evident confusion of religious variants (santri vs. abangan) with social classes (priyayi vs. commoners, the *wong cilik*, who were missing from Geertz's scheme).

Here again we find a statement that seems utterly extraordinary today:

> It is very hard, given his tradition and his social structure, for a Javanese to be a "real Moslem." … The otherness, awfulness and majesty of God, the intense moralism, the rigorous concern with doctrine, and the intolerant exclusivism which are so much a part of Islam are very foreign to the traditional outlook of the Javanese. (Geertz 1960: 160)

Note the stereotypes here. There was (a) the Javanese "tradition" – the inheritance from the past – (b) the "social structure" – that is santri, abangan and priyayi – and (c) the "traditional outlook" which was little influenced by Islam, all of which combine to make it "very hard … for a Javanese to be a 'real Moslem'." And then there was Islam, which was (contrary to the ascribed traditions, social structure, and outlook of the Javanese) rigorously focused on doctrine, intolerant and exclusive. Looking back at the history of the 1950s, one might be forgiven for thinking that this depicts the Catholic Church more accurately than it does the many faces of Islam around the world. Certainly, no serious observer would make such a claim today. But it must be remembered that Geertz was observing and writing at a time of profound polarization, when the boundaries between santri and abangan were hardening dangerously. The publications of the MIT team remain invaluable for their depiction of this polarization. Robert Jay, another member of the team, wrote of "a religious schism that cuts straight through local society" (Jay 1969: 4–5) and observed how that schism hardened over the months of his research in Pare.

Jay published a monograph with a notable title, *Religion and Politics in Rural Central Java* – notable because his research was done in East, not Central,

Java – in which he attempted to project the abangan-santri tensions far back into Javanese history, with unpersuasive results. He evidently saw this history as a contest between Islam – a new, invading force – and the pre-Islamic and implicitly more authentic traditional culture of the Javanese. On the seventeenth century, he wrote, "The coastal rulers in their struggle with Mataram invoked a religiously pure Islam as a rallying standard, especially against Sultan Agung (1613–1646) and his successors" (Jay 1963: 10). There is a particular irony here for, as we will see below, the reign of Sultan Agung was a major time of kraton-led Islamization. More broadly, Jay set out a stereotypical historical scenario from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries onward:

> Beginning some five if not six centuries ago, an expanding Islam, equipped with a unitary and exclusivist philosophy and capable of imbuing its adherents with a strong sense of community, engaged the intellectually sophisticated philosophy of Javanese society, one grounded in ancient beliefs and social relationships and commanding wide loyalty. … While the more formal religious elements of the traditional position, including the major ritual forms of worship to the old Hindu-Javanese gods, were lost, the ideological integrity of the traditional Javanese way was maintained. The more extreme orthodox Moslems, on the other hand, successfully resisted much of the remaining traditional forms, especially in esthetics and theology. Between these two extremes, however, a broad middle ground of accommodation did develop, though not without some friction. (Jay 1963: 101)

We may note here again the essentializing stereotypes. Islam had a "unitary and exclusivist philosophy" and included "more extreme orthodox" types. The Javanese, by contrast, had an "intellectually sophisticated philosophy" with "traditional forms." In his introduction to the monograph, the historian Harry Benda expressed criticism which must have been uncomfortable for the still-junior Dr. Jay to read: "Valuable and indispensable as Dr. Jay's study is … his projection of the schism onto earlier Javanese history may be subject to some questions" and his account of the 1930s "is, I believe, erroneous and misleading" (Jay 1963: iv). Today we may endorse Benda's criticism, for we now have more substantial research to support it than he did at the time.

A dichotomy between what was Islamic and what was authentically Javanese was not found only in sociological and anthropological publications. The work of G.W.J. Drewes (1899–1992) also reflected such views. He was in Indonesia from 1925 to 1938 and again in 1946–7, so again this was someone whose personal impressions came from pre-Second World War and Revolution-era

Indonesia. After the Second World War he held professorial positions at Leiden University in Javanese, Malay, Islamic Studies, and Arabic. One would think him thus well qualified to bridge conventional cultural boundaries. In 1954 he published a new edition of a Javanese *primbon* (handbook or notebook) of Islamic teachings which was clearly of sixteenth-century origin. That had previously been edited in 1921 by B.J.O. Schrieke (1890–1945), who saw evidence there of Islam being adapted to a Javanese setting. Drewes would have none of that: "The result of this research was disappointing in so far as there appeared to be no evidence of that 'adaptation to the Javanese surroundings' of which Schrieke thought he had found indications in this text" (Drewes 1954: 3). Furthermore, "The teacher in whose lessons all of these various issues arise is undoubtedly an adherent of orthodox mysticism," Drewes wrote (1954: 4), evidently implying that "adaptation to Javanese surroundings" would be tantamount to heterodoxy.

Drewes' conclusion in this regard was remarkable in light of the terminology found in the primbon text. There we find *Allah* used in stock Arabic phrases, but otherwise the term for God is the Javanese *Pangeran* (lord, which was used in Javanese both for temporal and supernatural lords). For heaven we find *swarga* or *syarga*, for soul *suksma* and for asceticism *tapa*. These are all Javanese words with roots in Old Javanese and/or Sanskrit and which were thus freighted with pre-Islamic connotations. The most remarkable case is the use of Javanese *sĕmbah* or *sĕmbahyang* for prayer. The sĕmbah is a gesture of respect or devotion formed by placing the palms of the hands together before the nose. In the case of sĕmbahyang, this is sĕmbah to the *hyang*, the gods. Drewes, however, translated sĕmbah or sĕmbahyang not with a Dutch word for prayer but rather with the Arabic term *ṣalāt* (Drewes 1954: 54–5), thereby reinforcing in his translation the impression of Islamic orthodoxy without "adaptation to Javanese surroundings."

In some circumstances there was indeed conflict between Islamic and Javanese senses of identity, cultural styles, and belief systems. This can be seen in another Javanese text also edited by Drewes (1978), which is clearly from an early stage of Islamization some place in Java. His dating of the text to the sixteenth or seventeenth century is entirely speculative; it could have come from, say, Blambangan as late as the late eighteenth century. In any case, it clearly reflects early Islamization in a transitional society. One passage distinguishes *agama Sĕlam lawan gama Jawa* , that is, the Islamic religion vs. the Javanese religion, while another denounces the wearing of "infidel clothes" (*wong kapir.... panganggoné*) (Drewes 1978: 36–7).

So, we may conclude that there were indeed circumstances in which adherents of Islam and adherents of pre-Islamic religious life regarded themselves as

occupying separate realms. But there was also compromise, accommodation, and synthesis. It was, in other words, a complex and dynamic time of social change, but Drewes appears to have been blind to that complexity.

Another example of this paradigmatic legacy may be discerned in the general history of Indonesia by B.H.M. Vlekke (1899–1970). Whereas the scholars discussed above held views of Indonesia that were influenced by their personal experiences there before World War II, Vlekke never set foot in Indonesia. He was trained as a European historian and eventually became Professor of International Political Relations in Leiden. During the war he was in the United States. There he wrote his book, primarily to inform Americans about Indonesia, which had become a significant policy issue because of its occupation by the Japanese. The first edition appeared in 1943. Despite his lack of personal background, Vlekke's history was remarkably good and served for many years as the standard reference for English-readers. Nevertheless, we see reflections there of the stereotypical distinction between what was authentically Javanese and what was authentically Islamic. For example, he wrote that for most Javanese lords in the sixteenth century, "the acceptance of Islam was only a means to an end, and for a long time, many of them remained reluctant to recognize Islam in the way it ought to be recognized, that is, as being exclusive of all other beliefs" (Vlekke 1965: 97) Here again we see true Islam as being exclusivist and the Javanese version as being some sort of opportunistic avoidance of that proper exclusivity.

In works such as those discussed above, we see an implicit paradigm that posited an authentic, "traditional" Javanese culture that differed from correct understandings of Islam. That Javanese culture was essentially pre-Islamic in style, its classical age being the kingdom of Majapahit at its apogee in the fourteenth century. This culture carried forward from the past (to quote Jay) its "intellectually sophisticated philosophy." Into this authentically Javanese culture came Islam – a foreign, invading force brought by traders or Sufis rather than warriors. This led to conflict with authentic Javanese culture, which resisted change. The result was, in this paradigm, a slow and very limited advance of Islam over Javanese culture. Islam thus was, repeating Van Leur's observation, "a thin, easily flaking glaze." In Geertz's terminology, the abangan and priyayi were seen as the surviving representatives of an authentic Javanese culture. The santri represented Islam's new, invading and limited Islamic faith, culture, and identity.

We may note that there were scholars who dissented from the paradigm described above. Vlekke may not have been free of stereotypical ideas, but he also saw complexities. He wrote, "Whatever the motives of Sultan Agung, his solemn affirmation of his Islamic convictions undoubtedly *resulted* [italics in

original] in a closer adherence to the rules of that religion in his kingdom" (Vlekke 1965: 150). So Vlekke (unlike Jay) had an idea of the role of Sultan Agung in reconciling Javanese and Islamic traditions, although in his time there had not yet been any significant research on Agung's reign.

The most distinguished historian of Java in those days was undoubtedly H.J. de Graaf (1899–1984). When he completed his doctorate in 1935, he was the first scholar who was both trained as a historian – he was a student of the famous Johan Huizinga at Leiden – and knew the Javanese language. He spent many years in Java, including incarceration in a Japanese prison camp during the Second World War. He was much influenced by the great scholar of Javanese, Poerbatjaraka. De Graaf's *Geschiedenis van Indonesia* (1949) was authoritative in ways that Vlekke's work could never be. In it he wrote of a process of cultural accommodation between Islam and the surrounding society. "Islam could only triumph by meeting to some extent the wishes of the Javanese. Important parts of Hinduism and what preceded it were saved. The tradition defends these concessions," he wrote (de Graaf 1949: 84). During 1935–42 De Graaf taught at a Gereformeerd Dutch-Chinese and Dutch-Native teacher-training school in Surakarta. He told me how he took his history classes on tours of Javanese historical sites, which were often associated with Islam, such as Demak and Kudus. This got him into trouble with the ultra-orthodox Christian authorities of the school, but he persisted. In 1958 de Graaf published his monograph on the reigns of Sultan Agung and his predecessor Panĕmbahan Seda ing Krapyak. He wrote of Agung's evident reliance upon a respected Muslim spiritual adviser, his regular mosque attendance, in which his dignitaries were obliged to follow him, the forced conversion of European prisoners of war to Islam and the tradition that Agung died as a holy man (de Graaf 1958: 103–4). I do not think that De Graaf – himself a devout, conservative Calvinist – ever entertained the idea that being Javanese and at the same time Muslim was (as Geertz claimed) "very hard."

De Graaf joined with his friend Th.G.Th. Pigeaud (1899–1988) to write a history of the earliest Islamic states in Java in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They worked with difficult and elusive sources to make sense as best they could of the history of that period. The result is inevitably speculative in places. On the idea of a gulf between what was Javanese and what Islamic, they had this to say: "One of the most important objections against the view of Javanese history that has been current until recently is about the idea that there was a deep chasm between the so-called Hindu-Javanese, 'heathen' period and the Islamic" (de Graaf and Pigeaud 1974: 3). Their speculation in this matter, however, sometimes went beyond what the patchy evidence could support. An example is their comment that "In this period. … Javanese home-life and society outside the realm of the court were influenced by Islam with its egalitarian

inclinations, which in this respect stood in contrast to the sacral and aristocratic class-ridden society of pre-Islamic Java" (de Graaf and Pigeaud 1974: 6). The surviving sources cannot support such analysis of class differences.

Thus, the idea that Javanese identity and Muslim identity were in large measure irreconcilable was not accepted by all scholars. It was but one interpretation, but it was a remarkably influential one. Its influence extended across political, social, cultural, historical, and religious studies. And it is a paradigm that is now rapidly dying, if not already dead. So, we may now consider how this transformation came about.

2 The New Interpretation

In my view, there have been two main reasons for the abandonment of the former paradigm and the acceptance of a new one, moving from the idea that Islam was marginal to mainstream Javanese history to the idea that it is among its major aspects. The first reason is that the role of Islam within Javanese society changed dramatically from about the mid-1960s onward. The second is that new research was done.

The social change was significant as, from the mid-1960s, Islam came to be a more prominent feature of Javanese life. The call to prayer began to be heard regularly and, as electrification spread, increasingly with the benefit of public address systems. Abangan life-styles diminished under greater Islamic influence. It was crucial in this regard that the principal institutions which supported and reinforced abangan identities disappeared or were dramatically weakened under Soeharto's New Order regime. Abangan villagers in any case were not generally sympathetic to hierarchical authority structures and institutions. The principal institutionalized expressions of abangan identity were political parties, particularly the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). PKI was wiped out in the killings of 1965–6. PNI was dramatically weakened and then disappeared through "fusion" into the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) in 1973. The political parties on the santri side were also emasculated, but santris had many other institutions supporting and reinforcing pious lifestyles and aspirations, notably mosques; religious schools; major organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama and Persis; wide networks of social welfare institutions and major national leaders. There was nothing comparable on the abangan side of society.

The New Order regime also had its own Islamizing agenda. This was expressed through compulsory religious instruction in schools, proselytization projects such as PTDI (Islamic Proselytism Higher Education) and P2A (Religious Mentality Promotion Project), development of the IAIN (State Institutes for

Islamic Studies) system, mosque-building, compulsory collection of alms from public servants, and the establishment of MUI (Indonesian Islamic Scholars' Council). The regime would tolerate no political competition from religious organizations. Rather, it wanted to control and direct Islam for its own principal purposes of social control and the destruction of Communism. One of the fruits of this approach was nevertheless deeper Islamization, consistent with the aspirations of Islamic activists. As Javanese society became more visibly Islamic in style, scholars began to realize that it was not, after all, "very hard … for a Javanese to be a 'real Moslem'," as Geertz had thought.

With regard to the new research that led to different understandings of the role of Islam in Javanese history, I can best recount my own experience. I was curious about the santri-abangan dichotomy from an early stage of my career. I set out as a young historian in the 1960s expecting to find abangan in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Java and curious to see what role they played. But the abangan never appeared, either in Dutch or in Javanese sources. Questions therefore began to arise in my mind about when and how this social distinction had arisen. When I first lived in Central Java in 1969, the dichotomy was clearly evident to me, but over the years thereafter it seemed to diminish significantly. My historical curiosity was piqued.

In the 1990s I was doing research towards what became *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java* (Ricklefs 1998), concerning the reign of Pakubuwana II (1726–49). The Javanese primary sources surviving from that period were less than from later periods, mainly because the kraton was sacked twice in 1742, first by the Chinese rebels and their Javanese allies and second by the Madurese. So, I felt that I could set myself the task of examining every surviving original document from that reign that was accessible in MSS collections in Indonesia and Europe. Historians of Java, in prioritizing primary sources to be consulted, generally incline towards *babads* (chronicles), contracts, letters and such-like rather than *belles-lettres*. This may have contributed to an underestimation of the importance of religious matters, for there seems to have been a literary convention that babads should tell of courtly intrigues, conspiracies, battles, and love affairs, but give only limited attention to religion. I was now reading everything available, including works that would be categorized as *belles-lettres* and Islamic mysticism. And I thereby found myself – quite unexpectedly – in the midst of one of the main episodes of kraton-led Islamization in Javanese history.

I read fascinating romances based on figures from Islamic history, filled with religious lessons. *Carita Sultan Iskandar* was a highly elaborated version of the story of Alexander the Great, the Dhū'l Qarnayn found in the Qur'an (18: 82–98). *Sĕrat Yusuf* was based on the story of Joseph in Egypt as found

in *sūra* 12 of the Qur'an. Unlike *Carita Sultan Iskandar*, *Yusuf* also became a popular story in a version related to but shorter than the kraton version from Pakubuwana II's time (Ricklefs 1998: 60–1). In the Javanese versions, the Qur'anic story of Joseph became a lengthy tale of piety and beauty. The most remarkable of these works was *Kitab Usulbiyah*. The title may have been meant to echo the Arabic tales of the prophets found in the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, but the encounter between Jesus and Muhammad which takes place on earth – a central feature of *Usulbiyah* – has (so far as I am aware) no parallel in the qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā. We may presume, however, that the author of *Usulbiyah* knew of the stories of the Prophet's ascension to heaven (Ar. *mi'rāj*), during which he meets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus in Jerusalem. These major literary works were all clearly set in a Javanese context. They are alike also in that they were all written in 1729, early in the reign of Pakubuwana II, at the behest of his formidable grandmother and pious Sufi Ratu Pakubuwana (b. c. 1657, d. 1732). All of these works are described as having supernatural powers, which Ratu Pakubuwana was mobilizing to perfect the reign of her grandson Pakubuwana II, who had acceded to the throne at the age of 16 and was showing few signs of competence, to say the least. She succeeded in her aim at least to the extent that, in 1741, the king presented himself as the model Sufi leader in Holy War when he successfully attacked the VOC garrison at the court itself.

There were also shorter texts of interest found with the works mentioned above, notably *Suluk Garwa Kancana*; this depicts the ideal king as a pious Sufi warrior and may represent a vision of Javanese kingship that goes back to Sultan Agung (on which, more below). Ascribed to this reign is also a work of moral and religious instruction said to have been composed by Pakubuwana II himself, the *Wulang-dalĕm Pakubuwana II*. *Sĕrat Cabolek* is only known in later MSS, but tells of a religious controversy in the court c. 1731, in the course of which one of the protagonists memorably exemplifies the synthesis at work in Javanese Islam by proclaiming "the sense of the *kawi* [Old Javanese] books *Bima Suci* and *Arjunawiwāha* … just like the *kawi Rāmāyaṇa*, these are (works of) Islamic mysticism (*tĕsawup*, Ar. *taṣawwuf*)" (Ricklefs 1998: 149).

These works of pious Sufism composed in court circles confirmed in my mind that Islam was central to understanding the dramatic – ultimately disastrous – reign of Pakubuwana II. They also led me to look again at the reign of Sultan Agung (r. 1613–46), for Ratu Pakubuwana's supernaturally powerful *Carita Sultan Iskandar*, *Sĕrat Yusuf* and *Kitab Usulbiyah* all evidently represented new versions of works originally composed in Agung's time. Given that her *Suluk Garwa Kancana* says it is a work "from Susunan Ratu" (one of the titles used by Agung in the 1630s before he adopted the Sultan title), that work, too, may also be based on a precedent from Agung's time. It became

clear to me that Sultan Agung's reign represented a major kraton-led pulse of Islamization, too, which Ratu Pakubuwana and her followers sought to recreate in a second such pulse a century later. There was clearly much that still needed to be understood about the role of Islam in Javanese society across the centuries.

And that led me to the decision to attempt a history of the entire process of Islamization among the Javanese, from the first evidence in the fourteenth century to the present. The outcome was the three books published in 2006, 2007 and 2012. Those books argue against the legacy paradigm described in the first part of this chapter and propose instead a new understanding, one that recognizes the central importance of Islam in the history of the Javanese.

The first of those books, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamisation from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth centuries* (Ricklefs 2006) tries to make sense of voluminous but patchy evidence that often fails to answer just those questions that are foremost in our minds. From the fourteenth century the evidence suggests a time of contested identities and faiths, as one would expect. There is evidence both of accommodation between Javanese and Muslim identities and of conflict in those early times. Sultan Agung appears as the great reconciler of these two traditions and identities in the early seventeenth century. Thereafter again there was a time of contest, challenge, and warfare, as opponents of the Mataram dynasty raised the banner of Islam against the court which, for much of the time after the 1670s, was in alliance with the *kafirs* of the VOC. The more the court lost legitimacy the more it needed the VOC's military support and thereby the more it inflamed the Islamic sensibilities of its enemies. The fighting came to an end in the 1720s with dynastic victory. That set the scene for the reign of Pakubuwana II and the second reconciliation of Javanese and Muslim identities under the influence of Ratu Pakubuwana.

The outcome was, by the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries, what I labeled a Javanese "mystic synthesis" resting upon three specific characteristics within the capacious boundaries of Sufism. The first was a strong sense of identity, that to be Javanese was to be Muslim. As one of the central characters in *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* says, "already embracing this holy religion / is every blade of grass in the land of Java, / following the Prophet who was chosen" (Ricklefs 2006: 202).

The second characteristic of the mystic synthesis was widespread observance of the five pillars of Islam: the confession of faith, daily ritual prayer, giving of alms, fasting during Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca for those able to undertake it. The evidence for religious practices at lower levels of Javanese society is frustratingly limited, so an element of caution is always

required. But such evidence as we have points to widespread observance. In 1822 Cornets de Groot reported from Gresik in East Java that the "main points of the Islamic faith" – by which he meant specifically those five pillars – "are carried out by many.... The *puasa* [fast] is carried out by most Javanese of all classes" (Cornets de Groot 1852: 271–2; Ricklefs 2006: 204–5). Raffles thought that Islam "seems only to have penetrated the surface" in Java but observed nevertheless that "all consider it a point of honour to support and respect its doctrines." "Pilgrimages to Mecca are common," he wrote, and "every village has its priest, and ... in every village of importance there is a mosque or building set apart adapted to religious worship." Raffles regarded the Javanese, however, as "very imperfect Mohamedans" because they failed to hate Europeans (Raffles 1830: II, 3–5; Ricklefs 2006: 215–16). John Crawfurd, by contrast, fiercely dismissed the Javanese, whom he judged to be "semi-barbarians" with little understanding of Islam; this may tell us more about Crawfurd's Scottish Presbyterian ideas about how religions should be lived than about the Javanese (Ricklefs 2006: 216).

The third characteristic of the mystic synthesis was an acceptance of local spiritual forces. Ratu Kidul; Sunan Lawu; village spirits; the supernatural denizens of caves, mountains, and forests; the beings that stole children in the night or turned themselves into tigers; the other unseen powers that thickly populated the Javanese mental landscape and moved in *wayang* shadow plays and other forms of performance – these were accepted as real. If modern sensibilities think this inconsistent with the preceding two characteristics, we should recognize that such combinations of ideas were found widely in the Islamic world before the reform movements which began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as, indeed, such compromises can be found in other world faiths.

This mystic synthesis seems to have been the dominant mode of Islamic religiosity among Javanese by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is best documented among the literate elite but seems (as far as we can know from the patchy evidence) also to have been observed widely across Javanese society. In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, every one of the three characteristics of the mystic synthesis would come under challenge.

The next book in the series on Javanese Islamization (Ricklefs 2007) covered the period c. 1830–1930 and was, as the title says, about *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions*. After the definitive Dutch conquest of Java in 1830, which plunged Javanese society into a truly colonial experience, from about mid-century Islamic reform movements spread. These were led and supported by a nascent middle class which was mainly based in Java's towns and

cities and often had business links with Arab traders. They adopted more pious Muslim lifestyles and, as their wealth grew, increasing numbers undertook the *hajj*, thereby forging links with Islam's holiest center and Middle Eastern reform movements. There was also a dramatic growth in the number of religious schools (pěsantren) in Java. These pious Javanese called themselves the putihan (the white ones), distinguishing themselves from their less pious, less educated, less sophisticated, and poorer fellows. From the putihan reformers came challenges to that belief in local Javanese spiritual forces which was part of the mystic synthesis.

There were, however, negative reactions to this more pious and orthodox version of Islam. Among ordinary villagers, many seem to have rejected the demands of reformers. If this was what Islam was, they seemed to say, then it was not for them. The putihan disparaged them as abangan – the brown or red ones, a term which in due course they adopted themselves, shorn of its negative connotations. The term abangan has not been found in sources from before the mid-nineteenth century, nor has any other conceptualization of non-pious, nominal Muslims as a separate social category been found. Both the sense of the abangan as a distinct social group and the term that was used to describe them were thus evidently new in the mid-nineteenth century. As the century passed, the term and the conceptualization of the abangan as a separate social category spread across the Javanese heartland, a process which we can only see dimly because of the inadequacy of evidence. There can be no doubt that abangan were the majority among Javanese. It appears that they withdrew from the first two characteristics of the older mystic synthesis, with diminishing strength of commitment to Islamic identity and diminishing observance of Islam's five pillars. Although the evidence for lower levels of society is better in the nineteenth century than before, we must still recognize that it has its limits. But it does seem that Carel Poensen – a missionary-scholar who spent three decades in Kediri – was correct when he observed that "among the great majority there flows another current which … causes the previous – in many ways naïve – religion more and more to be lost to the people. Basically, people are beginning to become less religious and pious."[4]

It is important to emphasize here that, judging from the evidence available to us, the abangan were not the embodiment of a surviving and authentic Javanese culture which resisted Islamization from its inception. Rather, they were a new social phenomenon of the nineteenth century, a reaction against Islamic reform movements. In the early twentieth century political parties

4 A fuller discussion and translation of Poensen's observations from the 1880s is to be found in Ricklefs 2007: 96–102.

appeared in Java and the distinction between putihan and abangan became politicized and institutionalized. Thus was born what came to be known as Indonesia's *aliran* (channel) politics, where social and religious allegiances were more important than social class. In the later nineteenth century we even find Javanese who rejected Islam altogether as a civilizational mistake. Also, for the first time, a small Javanese Christian community appeared.

Social class was important in Javanese society and in its upper levels another challenge to deeper Islamization emerged. The bureaucratic elite, the priyayi, were attracted by the modernity brought by Dutch colonialism, with its scientific advances, links to world events and suspicion of Islamic "fanaticism." European-style social events, reading clubs, interior furnishings and dress styles also attracted the priyayi. They thereby became more distanced from their own society, particularly from the pious putihan.

Thus it was, that by c. 1930 Javanese society was dangerously polarized along lines of religious identity, social group, and politics. Location mattered, too, with significant distinctions between rural and urban dwellers and even some relocation of villagers within rural society along aliran lines. It became clear to me that this was not a "primordial" situation with roots deep in the past, as Jay had imagined, and others evidently assumed. Rather, it was a historically contingent phenomenon of no great temporal depth. In 1930 it was a good deal less than a century old anywhere in Java and in many places no more than a generation or two old.

The final book in the series (Ricklefs 2012) seeks (as the title says) to capture the story of *Islamisation and its Opponents in Java* from c. 1930 to the present through "a political, social, cultural and religious history." During this period the politicized polarization of Javanese society escalated into violence during the Indonesian Revolution – notably at Madiun in 1948. It fed the political and social turmoil of the 1950s and early 1960s and culminated in the horrific slaughters of 1965–6. As already noted above, PKI was destroyed in these killings. PNI was weakened and subsequently further undermined by its "fusion" into PDI in 1973. All parties were prohibited by the "floating mass" policy from having any organizational structure below *kabupaten* (regency) level except during election campaigns. Thereby the principal institutions which expressed and reinforced abangan identity – the opponents to Islamization mentioned in the title – were now rendered impotent. The santri side of Javanese society, by contrast, had many remaining institutions and grew from strength to strength in the society, even though it was prevented from having an effective political expression.

As Islamization advanced from the later 1960s, the abangan thus became politically impotent and socially less obviously a majority. Although the

statistical evidence on such subtle matters is generally not very robust, it is possible that the percentage of the Javanese population that would be considered abangan was a minority before the end of the New Order period in 1998. My own attempt to assess the balance between santri and abangan in the early 1950s on the basis of imperfect evidence suggested that something between 10 and 40 per cent of Javanese were pious, observant santris in the mid-1950s and about 60–90 per cent were abangan (Ricklefs 2012: 81–5). Boland cites surveys that showed low levels of observance of Islam's five pillars in the 1960s. In that period, in Central Javanese villages between 0 and 15 per cent of respondents carried out ritual prayer (Ar. *ṣalāt*) and in 1967 only 14 per cent of the people of Yogyakarta paid *zakat* (alms) while only 2 per cent observed the fast (Boland 1971: 186). Such figures are consistent with the idea that the abangan were the majority in that time. A contrasting picture emerges from social surveys conducted over the period 2006–10. Then, some 90% of Javanese respondents claimed that they prayed and observed the fast always, routinely or "often enough." This does not necessarily demonstrate that people behave this way in practice, but it does tell us what has become a socially acceptable response. The heavy demand among Javanese to undertake the hajj – with years-long waiting lists to gain a place – also reflects the dominance of an Islamized identity and discourse in contemporary Javanese society (Ricklefs 2012: 268–72).

3 Concluding Comments

It is crucial for our understanding of the historical paradigm which began our discussion – the idea of a deep gulf between what was Javanese and what Islamic – to note again the timing of that paradigm's birth. It emerged in scholarly discussions in a period of advancing, dangerously polarized distinctions in Javanese society, from the early twentieth century through the 1950s. What Geertz and his colleagues observed were indeed serious and growing santri-abangan animosities. Place may have been as important as timing, for it is noteworthy that Geertz *et al.* worked at Pare, in the Kediri area. Historical evidence (evidently unknown to the MIT team) suggests that from the later nineteenth century this was an area of particularly strong social, cultural, and religious polarization. Anti-Islamic books which ridiculed Islam and depicted the Islamization of the Javanese as a civilizational mistake were written there in the 1870s: *Babad Kědhiri, Suluk Gatholoco* and *Sĕrat Dĕrmagandhul* (Ricklefs 2007: 181–211). The Communist Party (PKI) was strong there before 1965. So Geertz and his colleagues were not wrong in their observations, but they were wrong in assuming that the situation was as it had long been. Hence they

embraced, endorsed and promoted that paradigm, which we can now say was demonstrably wrong as a view of Javanese history. What they observed was not the contemporary manifestation of a conflict going back to the beginnings of Islam's progress in Java. Rather, they were seeing a historically contingent circumstance, a hiatus or interruption of something like a century's duration in the long history of the Islamization of Javanese society and culture. They wrongly assumed – as Jay proposed in his monograph – that santri-abangan tension and animosity had long been present. No one had yet done historical research to demonstrate that the idea was wrong.

The overthrowing of a previously influential paradigm is important not only for our understanding of the past. It also gives us a better understanding of the contemporary process of religious change in Indonesia and may even help us to think more clearly about possible futures.

It is pleasing to be able to say that much of the research for our new perspectives has been done by Indonesian scholars. It has long been my view that the international leadership for the study of Indonesian Islam must come from within Indonesia itself. In my own research I've relied on the work of both established and younger Indonesian scholars.[5] There, in my view, lies the future of the study of Islam among the Javanese.

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5 Readers will find works by the following Indonesian authors (among others) cited in my three books on Islamization in Java: Azyumardi Azra, Jamhari Makruf, Sartono Kartodirdjo, Djoko Suryo, Kuntowijoyo, Onghokham, Hermawan Sulistyo, Najib Burhani, Muhamad Hisyam, Irwan Abdullah, Arbi Sanit, Zamakhsyari Dhofier, Bachtiar Effendy, Fauzan Saleh, Amelia Fauzia, Noorhaidi Hasan, Masdar Hilmy, Luthfi Assyaukanie, Fajar Riza Ul Haq, Ihsan Al-Fauzi, Himawan Soetanto, Muhaimin, Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Raharjo Suwandi and Soegijanto Padmo.

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CHAPTER 2

Stepping on a *Wulu*: Minor Characters and Narrative Possibilities in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*

Tony Day

Abstract

Since the middle of the nineteenth century there has been continuous interest in one of Java's most famous poetic texts written in *macapat* metres, the 1815 *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten* or *Major Cĕnthini*. That interest has been focused on the poem's encyclopedic array of information about Javanese culture, not its quality as arguably the greatest expression of literary art ever written in Javanese. In this essay I examine one aspect of the text's literary greatness with the help of Alex Woloch's innovative analysis of minor characters and literary narrative. My close reading of one episode from the adventures of Mas Cĕbolang demonstrates that, contrary to a view widely held in Javanese and Indonesian studies, fictional characters in Javanese literature, based, however indirectly, on real, thinking, religiously devout (or impious), and sexually active people in the everyday world, are centrally important for understanding how literary narratives in Java have been created and what they mean.

Keywords

literature – *macapat* poetry – characterization – minor characters – narrative – *santri lĕlana* – T.E. Behrend – Alex Woloch – Benedict Anderson – Islam – Sufi

Since the middle of the nineteenth century there has been continuous interest in one of Java's most famous, yet not widely read, poetic texts written in *macapat* metres, the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten* or *Major Cĕnthini*.[1] The 722 cantos and 247,766 lines of poetry of this version of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, which was composed in Surakarta by Ki Ng. Ronggasutrasna, R.Ng. Yasadipura II, and Ki Ng. Sastradipura under the direction of the Crown Prince of Surakarta (later Pakubuwana V, r. 1820–23) in 1815 during the British occupation of Java

1 For a brief overview of this interest, see Day 2021.

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FIGURE 2.1 A drawing from *Sĕrat Damar Wulan*, British Library, London, MS. Jav 89, 44v. An East Javanese *lĕbe* (village mosque official) and his family are fleeing their village during the war between Majapahit and Menak Jingga. A soldier on the right seems to be doing a victory dance. The Javanese caption above the lĕbe's head reads: *lĕbe desa ngili* (a village lĕbe takes flight).
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, HTTPS://UPLOAD.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKIPEDIA/COMMONS/0/0D/SERAT_DAMAR_WULAN.PDF (ACCESSED MAY 5, 2022)

(1811–16), are arguably the greatest expression of literary art ever written in Javanese.[2] One of the text's most important interpreters, P.J. Zoetmulder, quoted here by Tim Behrend, summarizes the value of the text for Western and Indonesian readers alike when he writes: "Next to no other Javanese poem contains such a wealth of information about Javanese life in all its diversity as does the work that is now generally known as the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*" (Behrend n.d.: 2; my translation). Read and studied appreciatively as an "encyclopedia" of information about Javanese culture from the beginning of the nineteenth century by generations of Javanese and Indonesians as well as by Western academics, it is strange, notwithstanding its length and difficulty, that the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* has been neglected as a work of literature in its own right, as a long narrative poem, "unsurpassed" in literary as well as other ways, from which much can be learned about the composition of poetic narrative in Java.

2 The eminent philologist R.M.Ng. Dr. Poerbatjaraka called the poem "*de onvolprezen Tjĕntini*" (the unsurpassed *Cĕnthini*) (1940: 361, n. 3).

One philologist, however, has done pathbreaking work on both the Cĕnthini corpus of 321 manuscripts stored in collections in Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Great Britain and on the literary characteristics of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten*. Tim Behrend's analysis is the starting point for my own research on what makes the *Major Cĕnthini* great literature.

Behrend adopts and refines a definition proposed by Nancy Florida, the "*santri lĕlana* (wandering student of Islam) story," for a large family of texts to which the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* belongs. According to Behrend all santri lĕlana stories have: (1) At least one santri (pious Muslim, student of religion) as protagonist (2) who wanders (*lĕlana*) in search of a lost relative as well as religious knowledge, through forests and populated countryside far from courts and cities, a landscape that may or may not be identifiable as "Java," (3) enacting a story of adventure which is told by means of recurring episodes that are combined or omitted in various configurations, (4) ending when the protagonist gets into trouble because of his heterodox religious ideas and either escapes punishment or is killed (Behrend 1987: 325–26). There are six kinds of recurring episode in santri lĕlana narratives, according to Behrend: the *adĕgan lĕlampahan* (wandering episode, involving descriptions of the protagonist's departure from the village where he has spent the night, the landscape through which he passes and the adventures he has before reaching his next destination); the *adĕgan pitĕpangan* (the first encounter episode, when the protagonist arrives at a new village, learns something about it and is by degrees introduced to the village headman); the *adĕgan tĕtamuwan* (the pay-a-visit episode, in which the protagonist introduces himself and is invited to spend the night by his host); the *adĕgan rĕrasan ngelmi* (discussion of esoteric knowledge episode, in which after dinner and evening prayer, the protagonist discusses religion with his host and other invited guests and participates in musical performances and recitations of various kinds); the *adĕgan tilamwangi* (the bedroom episode, in which the protagonist retires for the night and has [or politely demurs from having] sex with the love-sick daughters of his host); and the *adĕgan pamitan* (the departure episode, in which the protagonist, after morning prayers and respectful goodbyes to the pious host, leaves for his next journey, with dejected, often deflowered daughters left behind in tears) (Behrend 1987: 233–35).

Behrend's delineation of the structural building blocks of santri lĕlana "discourse"[3] is enormously helpful for thinking about the literary form of the

3 I refer here to one of the two elements in every narrative. The other is the "story." "Structuralist theory argues that each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content

Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten, the longest, most sprawling text of the santri lĕlana genre, in which there are not one but seven groups of wandering protagonists, as well as many stylistic elaborations and additions of characters and scenes within each of the six basic episode-types described by Behrend.[4] Indeed, textual expansion on many levels, Behrend argues, resulting from the addition of new scenes and characters as well as verse after verse of poetic "exuberance" and "eruptions" of new detail (for other examples of poetic exuberance in Javanese texts written in very different styles at different times, see the essays by Arps, Bogaerts, Florida and Ricci in this volume), is characteristic of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten* and other santri lĕlana narrative poems written in the household of the Crown Prince of Surakarta (*Kadipaten*) in the first two decades of the nineteenth century (Behrend 1987: chapters 5 and 6). The Kadipaten version of the poem is 40 times longer than its oldest textual ancestor, the *Kidung Candhini,* written in the town of Cirebon on the northwest coast of Java in the early seventeenth century (Behrend n.d.: 43, n. 48), and 18 times longer than the version of the *Cĕnthin*i written in Surakarta in the late eighteenth century (Behrend 1987: 87).

Behrend says that "[t]he principle means by *bujangga* [poets] to manipulate and vary scenes within episodes are the obvious: expansion, contraction, repetition and rearrangement. All the multiplicity of plot, character, thematic and theological variety within episodes is achieved through these processes" (Behrend 1987: 236). From the 1790s to the 1820s in Surakarta, especially in the

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is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*" (Chapman 1987: 19).

4 As Behrend puts it (I quote him in full to convey the full reality of the text's literary-epistemological sprawl): "… [T]he *Major Cĕnthini* is precisely a hodge-podge of great masses of quite diverse materials gathered together within the dramatic framework of the *Cĕnthini* story. Passages that unquestionably come directly out of such sources as *primbon* (numerology and divination), *pakĕm* (*wayang* stories), *suluk* (Islamic mysticism), *piwulang* (etiquette and morals), *kawruh kalang* (building lore), *jampi-jampian* (herbology and medicine), *musawaratan para wali* (Siti Jenar story), *babad* (history), *jangka* (predictions), *sastra wadi* (mystical meaning of the alphabet), *dasa nama* (poetic language), *pikih* (Islamic law), *anbia* (tales of the prophets), *katuranggan* (animal lore/divination) and many others, are worked neatly into the greatly multiplied adventures of Amongraga and company as they travel among the hermitages and villages of the Javanese countryside. Oral sources and common, everyday experience were also tapped, as reflected in the numerous passages devoted to origin legends of sacred places, folk etymologies of names, remains of pre-Islamic kingdoms, power of heirlooms and their histories, ranks and titles of court retainers, *wayang* history and performance, and lists of such things as foods, fruits, plants, wild animals, birds, fishes, and more" (Behrend 1987: 84–85).

literary world of the Kadipaten,[5] however, the creative expansionism that can be observed in santri lĕlana poems as well as other genres involved the proliferation of what Behrend calls "extraneous incidents" (1987: 187) and "minor characters," many of whom "are given odd traits or speeches to make them stand out" (1987: 261). Behrend comments: "The interest in characters and their quirks does not make either *wayang* [shadow puppet theatre] or literature such as the *Jatiswara* character-centered in the same way that western literature tends to be. Instead, these entertaining characters function as adornments and fillips to the plot. For in Java, it is always the plot and its exigencies that carry characters along, and not the characters who determine the plot as a vehicle or reflection of their own development" (1987: 261).[6]

But what do we mean by the word "characterization"? The literary critic Alex Woloch, whose ideas I draw on for my own reading of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, says it means (as Anderson observes of *wayang* characters) "the literary representation of imagined human beings" (2003: 14). Woloch makes the point that is crucial for my own analysis: Literary characters are derived from, imagined in terms of, living people in the real world outside the text.[7] The fact that "the literary character is itself divided, always emerging at the juncture between [literary] structure [think of Behrend's "episodes" and "plots"] and reference [to the real world]" explains, writes Woloch, why "characterization" has become such a "divisive question" in literary theory (2003: 17).[8] To resolve the tension between character as an imagined human individual and character as a cog in the wheel of plot or some other feature of literary structure, Woloch proposes that we focus on "the dynamic interaction" between different

5 Behrend has a thought-provoking discussion of Recension G from Yogyakarta in the 1840s, which he says comes the closest of the *Jatiswara* recensions to being a "novel" in a Western sense (Behrend 1987: 186–87, 262–64). To my knowledge, santri lĕlana poems written in Yogyakarta have received even less attention than have those written in Surakarta.

6 This view is the dominant one in Javanese literary studies. For an exception, see Anderson's examination of puppets in *wayang*. Throughout his discussion Anderson connects shadow puppet "types" to living human beings. For example, at one point he writes: "For the characters of *wayang* are not simply divided into Left and Right, Kuråwå and Pandåwå, gods, kings, *brahmånå*, *satriyå*, princesses, giants, apes, and clowns, each with their own style and way of life. Each of these general categories contains within itself a wide range of personalities, which must be analyzed, however summarily, in their aspect as human types and as bearers of contrasting values" (1996: 23). The approach taken in this essay picks up on Anderson's observations of *wayang* to pursue a new direction in the study of Javanese literary texts.

7 For Woloch the central question is: How do "living persons get rendered into literary form" (2003: 11)?

8 Woloch (2003: 14) quotes Chapman (1987: 107): "It is remarkable how little has been said about the theory of character in literary history and criticism," a comment that also applies to critical writing about Javanese (and Indonesian) literature generally.

characters and between the "discretely implied individual and the overall narrative form" (2003: 18). Here Woloch suggests an inversion of the relationship between character and plot in Java as proposed by Behrend: it may be the "dynamic interaction" between characters and between characters and literary structures that generates narrative, not the other way around.

Woloch's reflections on characterization lead him to pay particular attention to "minor" characters and their interaction with "major" ones. Minor characters, from Greek Homeric epics to European nineteenth-century realistic novels to the Javanese *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, I would agree, are irresistibly fascinating:

> At first glance the interpretation of minor characters might seem to be nothing else than a repudiation of the text's own hierarchy of values, bringing to the critical foreground what has been subordinated to the narrative background. But how do we come to have the term "minor character" in the first place? The very occasion of the category suggests some dissonance between the character's delimited role and more extended impact. If "minor characters" were *literally* minor in the normative sense of this word – "Comparatively small or unimportant; not to be reckoned among the greater or principal individuals of the kind" (*Oxford English Dictionary*) – the term itself would never have been formulated or deployed so often in literary criticism and evaluation (2003: 37).[9]

"Minor characters exist *as* a category, then, only because of their strange centrality to so many texts, perhaps to narrative signification itself," Woloch concludes (2003: 37).

We can now remind ourselves of what Behrend tells us about the addition of minor characters to the early nineteenth-century recensions of the *Sĕrat Jatiswara* and *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* with their "odd traits or speeches to make them stand out" (Behrend 1987: 261) and then turn Behrend's observation into a question that Woloch might ask: *Why* were minor characters added to the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten* in the first place unless they were somehow central to how the authors wanted to rework the santri lĕlana narrative that they inherited, via many recensions and permutations, from the seventeenth-century *Kidung Candhini*? Why indeed was the text from its inception called the

9 Notice that Woloch writes as if his critical ideas can be applied to any literature anywhere. His book begins with a discussion of minor characters in the *Iliad*.

Kidung Candhini/*Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Candhini/Cĕnthini being the name of a servant, albeit the principal servant to a major character in the story? The poem, it seems, was inscribed with and calls attention to "minorness" from the outset.[10]

One of the answers to these questions might be: to make the story more realistic. It is true that Woloch's thinking about the significance of minor characters in fiction is strongly influenced by the role that minorness plays in the realist novels of nineteenth-century Europe (in his book he focuses on the work of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and Honoré de Balzac), which seek to represent everyday life in a comprehensive way. It is not my intention to argue that a comparable interest in everyday life of the sort that we meet in the works of Austen was expressed in literature in early nineteenth-century Java.[11] It is worth noting, however, as Behrend points out, that Recension H, the so-called *Cĕnthini Jalalen*, written in Surakarta in the early nineteenth century, is the first *Cĕnthini* recension "to reflect a concern with fixing the historical and geographical features of the poem in real time and space … This minimal historicism is replaced in the *Major Cĕnthini* by a geographic literalness of extreme proportions" (Behrend n.d.: 28).[12] Something like an expression of (what Europeans would call) "realism," the representation of the real,

10 In 1939, Zoetmulder speculated that Cĕnthini is the character with whom the "everyday" Javanese reader most identifies in his/her search for mystical knowledge as s/he reads the poem (1939: 85). My thanks to Ben Arps for this reference. In footnote 17 of her essay for this volume, Nancy Florida independently reaches a similar conclusion: "Perhaps the title [of the poem] reflects the position of Cĕnthini (and Tambangraras) as audience for Amongraga's teachings – like the audience of the book itself."

11 Ian Watt's comment, quoted by Woloch (2003: 19), that the European realist novel reflects a "vast transformation of Western civilization" in which "… the unified world picture of the Middle Ages [has been replaced by] … one which presents us, essentially, with a developing but unplanned aggregate of particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places" cannot be applied unqualified to the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*. That said, it might be interesting, as an exercise in comparative world literary analysis, to compare the poem to a novel by Jane Austen, who published her first novel in 1811. *Pride and Prejudice* appeared in 1813, *Emma* in 1815.

12 Behrend observes (Behrend n.d.: 24–28) that the Surakarta recension of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* that directly precedes its 1815 recension, known as the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Jalalen*, dated 5 May 1806, was explicitly "intended as a sort of guidebook for the devout, the faithful, and those filled with prayer." It seems likely that the word "*Jalalen*" in the title alludes to the *Tĕpsir Jalalen*, the Javanese version (in Arabic or Malay or Javanese?) of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī's Qur'an commentary, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, which Soebardi says "has been the most popular *tafsīr* in the *pĕsantrèn*s [religious schools] of Java and Madura up to the present day" (Soebardi 1971: 339). When Tambangraras is first introduced in the poem, she is described as having studied the *Tĕpsir Jalalen* (Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 143, c. 353, v. 10).

everyday world of Java, therefore, was expressed in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Javanese literary texts.[13]

Realistic minor characters in Javanese poetry from this period are not just found in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten*. Consider, for example, the illustrations in a late eighteenth-century manuscript of the *Sĕrat Damar Wulan*, British Library MS Jav 89, one of which is shown at the beginning of my essay.[14] Annabel Ten Gallop writes admiringly: "The pictures are rich in humour and the artist had a marvellous eye for facial expressions and bodily postures (a woman sleeping with her arm across her eyes, a sandal just balanced on a foot). Everyday 'things' are depicted in fascinating detail, from bird cages to garden pots and textiles, with wonderful scenes of music and dance of enormous interest to performers today" (Teh Gallop 2013). We can see examples of how minor characters and everyday realism are brought to life in two places in the drawing shown above, where the written script of the manuscript becomes the imagined ground on which characters in the illustration stand. Moving from left to right, the second *thole* (little boy, short for *konthole*, "his penis," a

13 In fact, literary realism can be found in Java long before the late eighteenth century. Realistic depictions of everyday Java date from the beginning of recorded literature in Java in the ninth century CE. See, for example, Zoetmulder's discussion of "the world of the poem" (1974: 187–214) and the work of Jiří Jákl on Old Javanese *kakawin*, for example Jákl 2020. The description of bawdy festivities and assembled crowds for the marriage of Prince Aja and Princess Indumatī in the thirteenth-century *Sumanasāntaka* (Worsley et al. 2013: 297–99) offers a close Old Javanese poetic parallel to the passage from the *Major Cĕnthini* of 1815 that I will discuss below. It is also worth noting that the seventeenth-century *Kidung Candhini*, although the geography it depicts is fictional, already displays an "unusual devotion to small detail and exhaustive description," foreshadowing what Behrend calls the "encyclopedic copiousness" and realism of the 1815 *Kadipaten* recension (Behrend n.d.: 8–9).

14 This page, 44v of IOL 89, as well the entire manuscript, can now be found on sastra.org, accompanied by transcriptions of the text. The line across which the lĕbe and his family are fleeing is from verse 46 of canto 13 in Durma. See https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/cerita/3133-damarwulan-british-library-mss-jav-89-akhir-abad-ke-18-1012-pupuh-01-34 (accessed 17 September 2022). For a discussion of the Damar Wulan story, see Pigeaud 1967: 231–33. Pigeaud says that the poem was first composed in East Java in the sixteenth century and became known in Central Java a century later. The number of different recensions and illustrated manuscripts attests to its popularity. The Damar Wulan story is referred to twice in the *Major Cĕnthini*. In Canto 79, Jayengsari and Rancangkapti, who like their older brother Amongraga have fled Giri but in a different direction, visit the ruins of Menak Jingga's palace in Blambangan with their servant Buras (Kamajaya 1985–91, 1: 285). Starting in Canto 607 and lasting intermittently into Canto 610, a Damar Wulan puppet play is performed for Jayengrĕsmi and Jayengraga, the two brothers of Tambangraras, and their uncle Kulawirya, who have gone wandering in search of their brother-in-law and central character in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Amongraga, after he has disappeared from Wanamarta (Kamajaya 1985–91, 10: 45–61).

term of endearment for little boys, which is clearly visible in the drawing, since little boys always run around naked in village Java) has wrapped the toes of his right foot over the *wulu* ("i") in the word ***adi**pati*, as if it were a smooth, round stone lying on his path. The *wulu* has been written above the *aksara* for "d." *Adipati* means "regent" and is used here as a title for one of the generals leading the attack on Majapahit, the Regent of Pasuruan. On the far right, the dancing soldier, celebrating victory perhaps, rests his right heel firmly on the *layar* ("r"), his toes on the *wulu*, of the word *kumi**tir*** ("flutter, wave back and forth"; the *wulu* followed by the *layar* are written above the *aksara* for the consonant "t").

Perhaps some amusing visual-verbal humor is intended here. The naked village boy is stepping on the high and mighty Adipati of Pasuruan's *adi* ("elegant, noble")-hood in verse 46, while the jubilant, dancing soldier is balancing, ironically perhaps, ever so precariously during a battle, on the Adipati's wavering (*kumitir*) spear, about to be hurled at the enemy who will defeat him. The Adipati is killed in verse 47, so the dancing soldier may be celebrating in anticipation of his demise. Although the possible meaning of the little boy's challenge to authority in MSS Jav 89 does not seem mystical, it is interesting to compare him to the representation of Sheikh Samsu Tabriz in a Sufi mystical poem, written by a Surakarta poet in 1815 (Florida 2021). Here the saint, "in the form of a naked three-year-old boy," suddenly appears before the king of Rum and defeats him in a metaphysical debate by "manifesting himself as the embodied truth of a form of experiencial knowledge of the Absolute" that the bookish king cannot understand (Florida 2021: 597). He also defies the king's authority during the debate by gradually adopting Javanese forms of address that are "cheeky and rather coarse" (Florida 2021: 603, n. 33), ending by speaking "down" to the king while the latter speaks respectfully "up" to the naked, upstart child. In both examples, little boys, stripped to their bare essentials, represent a down-to-earth realism that challenges mythologized royalty clothed in textual religiosity.

Whatever the case, the drawing shows a humble Muslim family, innocent refugees of war, fleeing anachronistically from a battle occurring in pre-Muslim Majapahit, thus adding another possible story line to the text, which makes no mention of the lěbe and his family. The drawing transforms the top line of the written narrative of the poem on the folio page into the physical ground, located in a particular village somewhere in East Java in the eighteenth century, of that imagined, briefly unfolding, *new* narrative inspired by, but nowhere found within, the written text.[15] "Couldn't one argue, in fact," Woloch wonders,

15 Other striking examples of the ways in which the drawings in MSS Jav 89 intrude upon, appropriate, and visually rewrite the Damar Wulan story by adding new, narratable detail

"that precisely the possibility of *telling more than one story at the same time* rests near the center of literary narrative as such" (2003: 40)? The fleeing lĕbe and his family are minor characters that have been added to the main narrative, not as an adornment, but as a new visual story fragment grafted onto the main narrative that not only connects it to the eighteenth-century present of the manuscript's composition, grounding its meaning vividly in the time and place when it was copied and first read, but also suggests another story waiting to be told.[16] The simultaneous presence of that other story, enscribed onto the main text, makes the Damar Wulan story more "realistic" and believable.

Something similar happens in a passage from the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Kadipaten* that I have translated below. These verses are found in a section of the poem in which a minor character known from pre-nineteenth-century recensions of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Mas Cĕbolang, has become the main protagonist of a newly added portion of the poem, 244 cantos long.[17] Mas Cĕbolang plays a

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can be seen on folio pages 23r, 42r, 54v, 59r, 76r, 112r, and 134v. British Library MSS Jav 89 can be accessed online at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=MSS_Jav_89. The drawing on folio page 76r, for example, which doesn't at first glance seem to intrude on the text graphically, shows four guards in Menak Jingga's palace after night has fallen, three of them fast asleep in different locations and postures, while the fourth reads to himself from a text on which is written: *mamaca damar wulan* (reading *Damar Wulan*). Perhaps the graphic embellishments painted in gold and red on which the reader and the sleeping guard right behind him are sitting are a meta-comment on the textuality of the scene, suggesting a *purwapada* sign meant to signal the beginning of a new poem. In this case, the drawing of the reader not only depicts a scene in a possible, new story about a young man starting to read the *Sĕrat Damar Wulan*, it also comments visually on, and seems to revise, the first three lines in the second verse in the *Dhandhanggula* meter written below it: //*Ana ingkang mĕmaca puniki* / *dangu-dangu anungkĕmi layang* / *tĕka ambanjur angorok* … (There was one [guard] who was reading / gradually he leant over the text / until he ended up snoring …). In the drawing, however, the young reader is leaning forward but is wide awake, his hands clasped over his ears so that he can listen to himself softly singing the text. Annabel Ten Gallop's pioneering work on the visual/artistic aspects of Southeast Asian manuscripts invites more attention from philologists to the ways in which the visual/artistic and the written/narrative elements of Javanese manuscripts interact with one another to produce meanings.

16 For the late eighteenth-century history of Blambangan, where English traders, the Dutch East India Company, Balinese kingdoms, and local Javanese potentates fought against one another for political and economic control, see Margana 2007. The illustrations of MSS Jav 89 clearly refer to this historical background by representing the commanders of the contending forces, one of whom is a Raja Inggris (king of England), as looking like Europeans dressed in eighteenth-century uniforms.

17 See Behrend n.d: 43. The new section in which Cĕbolang is the main protagonist begins in Canto 88 and ends with Canto 332 of the *Major Cĕnthini*. I accept Behrend's reclassification of Cĕbolang as a major character in the *Major Cĕnthini*, but I still don't have a clear idea what makes some characters major, others minor. In the case of Jayengraga,

starring role in the episode we will examine. How the minorness of the three characters who also appear in this scene contribute to defining and qualifying Mas Cěbolang's star quality is one of the questions I want to consider.

Cěbolang and his companions are reaching the end of a long journey through the countryside of East and Central Java where, as santri lělana in the mode described by Behrend, they have visited venerable Muslim mystics and Hindu-Buddhist temple ruins; discussed religious questions and learned about Javanese literature, history, and lore of all kinds; studied *wayang* and watched shadow puppet performances; displayed their dancing skills; and enjoyed lots of instructively described sex. At long last, they arrive in the prosperous town of Wirasaba[18] where celebrations sponsored by the Adipati are underway to give joyous thanks for the birth of a child after his wife's difficult labor. Cěbolang

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the younger brother of Tambangraras, who enters the poem when the narrative reaches Wanamarta and is a very prominent character from that point onward in the poem, I have discussed him as a "minor" character in a recent essay (Day 2021). He is, however, quite possibly a minor character in earlier versions of the poem who achieves major status in the 1815 recension. It is important to recognize, as Behrend points out, that it is possible for minor characters to *become* major characters across recensions, an occurrence that supports Woloch's contention that characters are important for narrative, since both Cěbolang and Jayengraga have many adventures that would be otherwise missing from the 1815 recension. A character's status within a single recension is also debatable, depending on how we interpret her or his significances. For example, we could ask: Is the hero of the *Major Cěnthini* Amongraga, the aristocratic Sufi saint, or Nyai Cěnthini, the village "everywoman" and female attendant of his wife Tambangraras, after whom every recension of the poem from the seventeenth century onward has been named? See n. 10 above.

18 This "Wirasaba" is possibly the actual town in East Java in the lower Brantas River valley that was conquered by Sultan Agung in 1615. According to Ricklefs (2008: 47; see the map on p. 467), the town was strategically and politically important because it was the gateway to the lower Brantas and located in the heartland of the ancient kingdom of Majapahit. The *Sĕrat Cabolek*, which Ricklefs thinks was composed in Kartasura c. 1731 (1998: 127–62), mentions the main character of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Amongraga, and says that "he was a man from … the village of Wirasaba / the hamlet of Wanamarta, / the son in law / of *Kyahi* Bayipanurta. / He was the husband of Tambangraras / and the master of nyai Cĕnthini" (Soebardi 1975: 104). According to the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Amongraga was from Giri, not Wirasaba, but it is interesting that "Wanamarta," which is fictional, is said to have been under the jurisdiction of Wirasaba. When Cěbolang leaves the narrative (temporarily) in Canto 332, the action shifts to Wanamarta, where Amongraga arrives and marries Tambangraras. Another connection between Wirasaba and Wanamarta is made later in the poem: the supernaturally beautiful gamelan set *Alun Jaladri*, which is played during the wedding celebrations for Amongraga and Tambangraras, was a gift from the Adipati of Wirasaba to Ki Panurta, village head and father of Tambangraras (Day 2021). Note also that the *Sĕrat Cabolĕk* mentions Nyai Cĕnthini as memorably and inseparably linked to the story of Amongraga "who had opened the veil" of secret, mystical knowledge and as a result was put to death by Sultan Agung (Soebardi 1975: 104–5).

and his four santri travelling companions meet the town *pengulu* Ki Jamali who introduces them to the Adipati (Kamajaya 1985–91, 4: 282; Canto 321, v. 20). The visitors are immediately swept up in the festivities. It doesn't take long for Cěbolang and the best dancer among his companions, Nurwitri, to perform for the Adipati and the masses of villagers who have gathered to celebrate. Our excerpt begins after Cěbolang has begun his performance. The Adipati has requested that the seductive Nurwitri also dance dressed as a *ronggeng* (professional female dancer), with the Adipati and his raucous band of retainers joining in, and Cěbolang has just exited the dance space after a star turn. The metre of the verses below is *Sinom* (8a, 8i, 8a, 8i, 7i, 8u, 7a, 8i, 12a).[19]

64. Kweh bungah satěngah ana
sawiji kaum ningali
Dulsubur lan bojonira
nědya melu naurani
mantěngah gambyong singir
kang gumawang andudulu
sěsěg tan antuk marga
migag-migug sru kapipit
nimbok Subur rada wasis sok
gělěman ||
65. Den incih kiwa těngěnnya
dhiněsěg dipungagapi

64. Much pleasure was felt on all sides.
A certain santri was watching,
Dulsubur[20] along with his wife.
They planned to join in the chorus,
amidst the singing dancers.
They clearly saw where they should go …
Cut off! They couldn't find a path,
stuck in place, squeezed hard together.
Ms. Subur was a sly one and an easy make!
65. So they went for her, left and right.
She was shoved and pushed; she was groped.

19 The full passage, from which this excerpt has been taken, is in Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 6–9, Canto 321, v. 54–79. My Javanese text comes from the sastra.org online version of Kamajaya's edition, https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/serat-centhini/969-centhini-kamajaya-1985-91-761-jilid-05-pupuh-321-332, with small changes to the spelling (*pěpět* as "ě" and *taling* as "e"). In making my translation, I have followed Nancy Florida's practice of observing the syllable count for the Javanese poetic metres in my English rendition. Any other poetic effects, such as alliteration and assonance, which in Javanese poetry are used to make puns and convey multiple meanings of and connections between words in different lines of a verse, are accidental. Nancy Florida gave me invaluable help in improving the translations throughout the essay since I first drafted it. My warm thanks also go to Willem van der Molen for suggesting important refinements to the translation of the excerpt presented here and to Els Bogaerts and Sarah Weiss, who have been my expert advisors on matters of Javanese dance and music, respectively, for sections of this episode that I have not had space to include here.

20 Dulsubur is a shortened form of the name Abdul Subur. *Subur* means "luxuriant, abundant," suggesting that Dulsubur is a santri of some substance and standing in Wirasaba, but also that his wife has "abundance" of another kind.

kĕna cĕg kang payudara

kinĕpĕl pinidih-pidih
puringisan ngesĕmi
kang nguyĕg saya kĕsusu
rinangkus sinjangira
(m)bok Subur pasang anyĕnthing
tanganira kiwa gondhelan kang lanang ||
66. Kang tĕngĕn kari saduwa

neng dhĕngkul sarwi anjĕnthir
pinarnahakĕn agampang
tumanduk kang mangarahi
bĕnĕr andĕdĕl nuli
garĕgĕl balusuk puput
kasamur iyak-yĕgan
lir linampahkĕn pakolih
enak-enuk sipunuk nora katara ||

67. Uyag-uyĕg dhĕdhĕsĕkan
Dulsubur pangrasaneki
dĕg-dĕge solahing kathah
tan nyana bojone untir
anjongok rada (n)jĕngking
kĕsĕl ngadĕg awatipun
Dulsubur wus pitaya|
kasamur solahing janmi
malah gĕnti kiwa tĕngĕne anggarap ||
68. Gilir ginarap wong tiga
nuju panggarap kang keri
duweke gĕdhe adawa
satĕkĕm nĕt mangang luwih
Ni Subur ngulĕt njundhil
asru banene kumlukuk
Dulsubur kagyat mulat
bojone ginarap wingking
asru ambĕngok ngudubilah katiwasan ||

Her two breasts were snatched and pulled at
by the handful, her nipples pinched.
They bared their teeth in laughter,
faster and faster they rummaged.
Seizing her skirt with both hands,
Ms. Subur exposed her derrière.
With her left hand she firmly clung to her husband.
66. With her right hand she pressed down
on her knee and let out a flood.
Getting to the spot was easy,
reaching what he was aiming for.
This is it! Then gave a push …
She felt the poke, entered to the hilt.
All was hidden by the crush.
It seemed what was sought was obtained:
So sweet! And the humpback was nowhere to be seen!
67. Tottering, staggering, pushing,
Dulsubur having the feeling
of masses standing and moving,
clueless his wife was being screwed,
straining to see, ass upward.
She was tired, being on the look out
for Dulsubur, still thinking
she was cloaked by the swirling mob,
even though from right and left men were taking turns.
68. Three men all had her one two three.
When it came to the last one's turn,
his was enormous, and so long!
One hand squeezing couldn't get around.
Ni Subur kicked out her heels,
loud rumbling coming from within.
Startled, Dulsubur could see
his wife being done, there behind.
"God be my refuge!" he cried, "Disaster has struck!"

69. Gumrubyug kang (ng)garap uwal
slendhang tapih dendhedheli
marang bangsat kang anggarap
mung kari kulambineki
geger pating jarĕlih
Dulsubur sru tulung-tulung|
mundhak dadi bayangan
bojone denuli-uli
nulya mulih bojone banjur pinala ||

69. The pack that was busy broke loose.
Her scarf and dress were both ripped off
by the devils who did the deed.
Only her blouse remained behind.
Chaos, yelling and screaming!
"Help me, help me!" Dulsubur cried.
Lest it turn into a dream,
with thumb and finger he pinched her.
They quickly went home and then he punished his wife.

70. wontĕn walanjar satunggal
abdinira ki dipati
pan lagya kagĕm sapisan
ing mangkya dipunkasihi
nama pun Jaemanis
akuning wĕdana suluh
netra (n)jahit balerah
alandhĕp idĕp tumĕngging
payudara kĕngkĕng lir mundhu undhuhan ||

70. There was a youthful divorcée,
a servant to Ki Dipati.
From the moment he possessed her
thereafter she was his beloved.
Her name was Jaemanis.[21]
Her visage was as pale as gold,
with bright, elegant eyes,
her sharp lashes pointing skywards,
her firm breasts like ripe fruit ready for the plucking.

71. Pangangge kinacek pelag
ngungkuli kang para sĕlir
tikĕl rĕgi parabotnya
saking sihe ki dipati
nging rada ngadi-adi
pan kĕmayu adol ayu
ulate ĕblas-ĕblasan
aling-alinge ngladeni
mring ki adipati yen wus nĕbih (ng)gennya ||

71. Her apparel was most elegant.
She surpassed all of the co-wives,
her wardrobe costing twice as much,
Ki Dipati adored her so.
But she was a little spoiled,
putting on airs, strutting her stuff,
her glance darting here and then there.
Her alibi: "I'm serving guests!"
That's what she told Ki Dipati, when off alone.

72. Malah cĕlak lawan panjak
sadhela bali ngladeni
kacu kumbaya kusta-bang

72. Now she was next to the musicians,
back waiting on them for a tick,
with red napkins from India,[22]

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21 *Jaemanis* means "sweet ginger root."

22 It can be supposed that Jaemanis has either wrapped betel-chewing ingrediants in these napkins, *gambir* leaves for example, and was bringing these to the musicians with whom she was flirting (especially Mas Cĕbolang, as we learn in verse 73) or that she was bringing *kacu* to any prospective lover who was chewing betel and might need more gambir and/or a handkerchief to wipe his lips. In verse 7 of Canto 521, in a description of a wild

krĕp nginang idu ngacuwis
bĕlisĕn susurneki
sabithi atos lir watu
polahe kĕrang-jalan
nener kewĕs galak lirih
pan sasore wis pindho kacune ilang ||
73. Saking mendese aganas
nas-nes menjeng nunjang kuping
kapengin marang kang nrĕbang
sedhat-sedhot ulatneki
kadulu mring ki dipati
agya marĕk aneng ngayun
yen wus katungkul lunga
dol ayu dlerengan liring
pan kĕmaruk kinasihan ing bĕndara ||
74. Anjĕnggleng minggir kalangan
misah (ng)gon lan kancaneki
eram sakeh kang tumingal
kĕnese lindhis kĕmini
samana amarĕngi
sawiji wong andĕdulu
sudagar ngangge mumpyar
sakojur dipundhedheli
kĕna kabeh gĕmbor-gĕmbor
galimpangan ||
75. Geger asru lĕng-ulĕngan
caruk-caruk ting jarĕlih
wor winor nora karuwan

spitting betel, talking non-stop:
"Damn this quid of tobacco!
A chew is as hard as a rock!"
She moved like a street mussel,
gliding along in search of prey.
In one evening, the napkins had disappeared twice!
73. Her flirting lit a fire of lust.
If there's a whore, word gets around.
She wanted the one playing *tĕrbang*.[23]
Non-stop she stared and ogled him.
Ki Dipati kept her in view.
Quickly she came out to the front.
The coast was clear, she was off!
"Look at me!" all her glances said,
bursting with pride to be the loved one of her Lord!
74. Eye-catching, she sought the sidelines,
leaving the spot with a new friend.
Those who looked on were astonished:
flirtatious and cheeky to boot!
At just that very moment
a certain man was looking on,
a merchant with glittering clothes.
Everything was ripped off him!
People were in uproar, shouting and falling down.
75. Chaos, loud noise, wrestling en masse,
scratching each other and yelling,
a mishmash you wouldn't believe!

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tayuban dance party hosted by Nyai Sĕmbada, kacu and gambir seem to be synonyms (Kamajaya 1985–91, 9: 34, Canto 521, v. 7). The *kacu mas*, or "golden handkerchief," the pyramid-shaped box that is described as a "handkerchief box" by Groneman (1895: 81), was one of the eight insignia (*upacara*) of royal rank in the courts of central Java, carried and displayed in processions (See Figure 2.2). Given the way Jaemanis is flaunting her connection to the Adipati, to suggest that she was attributing something "aristocratic" to her kacu-bearing mission of seduction is not entirely fanciful. My thanks to Nancy Florida for identifying the purpose of the handkerchiefs and for suggesting the further, self-royalizing association that they might have had in the characterization of Jaemanis (personal communication, 26 February 2021).

23 Namely, Mas Cĕbolang.

kabrawuk (m)bok Jaemanis
tělas den-balojodi
ambalějěd bukung widhung
kauyěl ing-akathah
angaděg ki adipati
langkung duka asru mring
kawulanira ||
76. Dene kaya wong alasan
kabeh kang nonton si Joprit
de iku mas patih ada
nyengoh kabeh kěneng baring
upayaněn den aglis
sapa kang agawe rusuh
gupuh kawulanira
anggoleki kang ngrusuhi
tan kapanggya mung wong siji
ngathang-athang ||

Ms. Jaemanis was captured,
all her clothing taken off,
stripped nude like a tailless chicken,
people swarming all around.
Ki Adipati then stood up.
He was outraged and shouted to his retainers:
76. "Why, they are just like savages,
all those watching are scoundrels!
Mas *Patih*, go investigate!
In plain sight, they've all gone crazy!
Go quickly now and look for
who it was who caused the trouble."
In a rush the retainers
went after the troublemakers,
but they only found one man lying on his back.

What are the minor characters doing here and how do they contribute to the "character-system"[24] of the poem? Are they just creative "adornments" and "fillips" to the main narrative which is concerned with the performances by Mas Cěbolang and Nurwitri that lead to their sexual encounters with the Adipati of Wirasaba, discussed by Ben Anderson in his essay "Professional Dreams: Reflections on Two Javanese Classics"? Or are they, on the contrary, fundamental to the narrative structure of the passage I've translated and to the Wirasaba episode as a whole? I want to test the following sweeping assertion made by Woloch against the evidence provided by the *Major Cěnthini*: "Minor characters are not simply ornamental and cannot be analyzed as merely a supplement of or colorful counterpoint to the main plot and central characters because the overriding metaphoric structure, the 'theme, plot and purpose' that we can map out of the thickness of the narrative, is built *through* the minor characters, and, more saliently, through their very minorness …" (2003: 144–45).

The episode from which I've drawn our passage begins with a stunning dance performance by Mas Cěbolang, a major character whose artistic and sexual prowess is already known to the reader from earlier episodes. He is just

24 Woloch defines the "character-system" as "the arrangement of multiple and differentiated character-spaces – differentiated configurations and manipulations of the human figure – into a unified narrative structure" (2003: 14).

beginning to arouse the passions of his audience in Wirasaba. Canto 321, v. 40 opens the scene of the performance on a night when the moon is full and the Adipati, his retainers, and other village notables, together with the people of the town, have gathered to give thanks for the birth of his child. After a detailed description of the feast that has been prepared and of the finery worn by the Adipati, Mas Cĕbolang attires himself for his performance. At the Adipati's command, Cĕbolang begins playing an instrument popular in Islamic circles called the tĕrbang (frame-drum), then dancing and singing, accompanied by a chorus of singers who also play tĕrbang and other instruments.[25] The reaction of the villagers to what they are witnessing is instantaneous. As the instrumental sounds of the ensemble

52. Wor swara sru lagu Lĕmpang	52. mixed with the voice singing *Lĕmpang*,[26]
orĕg kang samya ningali	those watching all shook to their core,
jĕjĕl riyĕl yĕl-uyĕlan	thickly packed, teeming and swarming,
dhĕsĕkan pipit pinipit	pressing together, cheek to jowl.
keh solah-bawaneki	A lot of that behavior
bungah kang para calimut	bore fruit for the many thieves
cĕlĕr-cinĕlĕr ramya	who busily picked pockets.
kathah kang kelangan sami	For many, things just disappeared.
opyak geger sakĕdhap nora karuwan ||	Chaos: "Where'd it go? Just like that! Can't believe it!"
53. Suwe-suwe tan rinasa	53. Gradually it didn't matter.
kelangan pĕrlu ningali	"What's gone is gone! We need to watch!"
jalwestri carup dhĕsĕkan	Men and women pressed together.
wong kang (n)dhugal mangarahi	Men without manners tried to grab
mring wong wadon anggriming	onto women, cop a feel,
tangan nguyĕl-uyĕl susu	hands stroking and fiddling with breasts,
nalusup gagap-gagap	slipping it in and groping,
gĕmbok ginĕgĕm agĕmi	getting a fistful of pussy. Lots did that.
keh mangkono wĕneh tĕkĕm tinĕkĕman||[27]	Others took a handful and gave one.

25 For more on this kind of performance, see the essay by Nancy Florida in this volume.

26 *Lĕmpang* is mentioned several times in the *Major Cĕnthini* as the name of a melody, a tĕrbang piece and a *gĕndhing* for gamelan.

27 Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 5.

Verses 52 and 53 contain the first of several crowd scenes that occur during Mas Cěbolang's performances in Cantos 321, 322 and 323. The description in these two verses is conventional, both because it registers the powerful effect that performances by the *Sěrat Cěnthini*'s santri lělana usually have on village spectators – disorderly conduct, uncontrolled sexual behavior, and a kind of ecstasy that occurs during Sufi religious experiences described in the poem – but also because they are impersonal. The verses register the intensely emotional, sexually overstimulated, and disorderly state of a crowd that is faceless. Spectator crowds are conventionally anonymous in the *Sěrat Cěnthini* and other works of Javanese literature.[28] But here this does not remain the case.

A sequential rhythm of alternating vignettes and ever-expanding particularity has begun to take shape: description of the star performer and his performance; reaction of the crowd; more detailed description of the star performer and his ensemble as their performance unfolds; specific reactions to the performance by named and carefully characterized individuals in the audience of villagers. As the expansionary, repetitive sequence progresses, humans and their actions come into sharper focus, becoming more particularized and generative of the larger structures of meaning in the poem. As we will see, the minorness of Mr. and Ms. Subur and Jaemanis and their character-spaces are not simply an expression, in general terms, of the narrative process that is typical of early nineteenth-century Surakarta literature. We need to understand why these individuals should emerge out of the anonymity of the crowd in the first place and what their emergence has to do with the narrative of the episode we are examining and the meaning of the entire poem.

In verse 57 the Adipati intervenes in the proceedings directly for the first time. He has already been introduced in verse 42 of Canto 321, but he has been sitting in state, *pingger pěndhapi gennipun*, "at the side of his pavilion," surrounded by his retinue, watching the celebrations unfold. The Adipati's request to see Nurwitri dance as a ronggeng makes him another sexually aroused spectator, since it registers the beginning of his own sexually motivated participation in the performance, which will eventually lead to his having sex, exuberantly described, with both the "woman" Nurwitri and with Cěbolang, who is first a "woman," then a "man," in their encounter in Canto 323. But before the narrative reaches the description of Cěbolang and Nurwitri dancing together as male and female performers in verse 81,[29] it continues with its

28 The question of how such impersonal crowd scenes fit into and function in the generation of a narrative structure, however, has never been studied.

29 Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 9. Mas Cěbolang and Nurwitri, it is said, danced so beautifully that they "caused hearts to release their feelings, as Oněngan and Wukirsěkar always do"

slowly expanding, particularizing rhythm of alternating vignettes of performer and audience, each of which elicits a more elaborate narrative response. The narrative moves forward in verse 59 with a pointedly evocative description of the seductiveness of Cěbolang's singing, after which he begins to dance, which in verses 59–61 provokes both the Adipati and his soldiers (at his command) to join in. In verse 60, for the first time, the Adipati is described as the maintainer of "ritual protocol,"[30] law and order. Just like his request for Nurwitri to become "like a girl, a classy ronggeng" (*carestri ronggeng linuwih*, v. 57), such an added bit of characterization anticipates and calls for an expanded and more particularized treatment of that same narrative element further on. Cěbolang's own dance performance in verse 63, which eclipses Nurwitri's and the Adipati's in both quality and detail (his performative sexual superiority to his host will be displayed in full in Canto 323), leads to the introduction of the three minor characters, Mr. and Ms. Subur and Jaemanis, whom the preceding verses, starting with verse 52, have been preparing us to meet.

It is as if the poet, with a hand-held camera, while filming the event has suddenly zoomed into the crowd and picked out three individuals, recording sights and sounds close up. The handy-cam analogy seems apt because of the way the poet's sharply focused takes on what is happening shift angles from one moment to the next, as different voices address the listener/reader in indirect discourse. We are prepared by what has been described before to

(/ *akarya wĕmbaning ati, / kaya uga Oněngan lan Wukirsĕkar* //). Oněngan is a sister of Panji, the famous hero of a large cycle of stories, married to Wukirsĕkar or Gunungsari. The character Gunungsari had a prominent role in masked dance performances of the Panji epic in Surakarta in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. See the index to Pigeaud 1938, s.v. Oněngan and Goenoengsari. For a discussion of Mas Cěbolang's charisma as a performer in a much later episode of the poem, long after he has returned home from his educational adventures, married Amongraga's sister, Rancangkapti, and assumed the name of his father, Anggungrimang, following the latter's death, see Nancy Florida's essay in this volume.

30 The anonymous village crowd, which has gathered to celebrate the birth of the Adipati's child, reacts to the opening moments of Mas Cěbolang's performance by "seizing" (Jav. *ngrĕbut*) money, breasts, and sexual organs. This kind of "contestation of desire" (or *rĕbutan*; Pemberton 1994: 18) is a characteristic occurrence in ritual events in Java. As John Pemberton observed them while living in Java during the 1970s to 1990s, "rebutan struggles appear as exceptions to ritual protocol, moments of interruption when crowds suddenly descend on objects of power … To rebut is to *ngalap berkah*, to 'swoop down on and capture' (ngalap) … 'blessings' (berkah)" (1994: 257). Pemberton thinks that such seemingly random rĕbutan are an essential part of rituals in Java. There are many descriptions of various kinds of rĕbutan in the *Major Cĕnthini*. It may (or may not) seem strange to think of the rape of Ni Subur as "capturing a blessing," but there are good reasons for arguing that here and elsewhere in the poem, sex has a ritual, mystical significance associated with rĕbutan (and Sufism; see the comments and references in n. 38).

find certain types of narrative topic in these verses, namely: a village crowd; a rĕbutan involving sex and money (or its equivalent, in this case clothing); alternating descriptions of individuals and groups who are responding back and forth to one another (like Cĕbolang and his chorus of santri musicians and chanters); and representations of both men and women. Because this is a crowd and not a group of trained performers, all the movements and speeches in verses 64 to 75 are out of control, crude, and violent, rather than artistically skillful, beautiful, and civilized. If anything, though, the poetry of these verses is livelier, the vocabulary used to construct the two vignettes more vivid and precise (in the way at which the Javanese language excels) than anything we have already encountered in the poem so far from Canto 321, verse 52 onward. Crowd behavior in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* expresses, in the crudest possible way, the raw, physical energy at the heart of Sufi devotional practices involving music and dance, performances which are themselves described in beautifully poetic, esoteric terms.

The contrast between the mob and the performers is predictably maintained, therefore, but what is striking, even surprising, is the extent to which the three minor characters are particularized and narrativized, in a far more realistic manner than either Mas Cĕbolang, the star main character, or the Adipati, an important minor character. What happens in the two vignettes, to choose another analogy, is like the *ciblon* section of a gĕndhing, when the intervals between the notes played by instruments that carry the basic melody expand, allowing various other instruments to fill those sonic spaces with creative, often highly individualistic improvisations on the basic melody. The range of possible improvisation in tĕrbang or gamelan performance is restricted by the nature of the instruments and what they can play. But the range of variations can be expanded by means of the musical skill and expressive personalities of the musicians who are performing on them.[31] In our episode, spaces for three minor characters are opened within the main narrative to provide the virtuoso poet with opportunities to improvise new characters and story-telling possibilities, in addition to impelling the narrative forward and adding new perspectives on the main story as it heads to its dramatic denouement, its final *gong*, as it were, at the end of Canto 323. That is when Mas Cĕbolang violates the Adipati's hospitality and defies his authority by carrying out multiple sexual dalliances with the Adipati's concubines and is forced to flee Wirasaba when his escapades are discovered.

31 For a wonderful discussion of how Javanese musicians deploy both skill and personal preference to produce improvisations in their playing, see Pemberton 1987: 25–27.

To return to our main question: What are the function and significance of the two vignettes in verses 64 to 75 in which minor characters memorably appear? To give an answer with respect to the whole Wirasaba episode (Cantos 320 to the end of 323), we can begin by noticing that the *Major Cĕnthini* poet has adapted the standard episode structure for santri lĕlana poems to his own, innovative narrative plan. Already in the aděgan pitĕpangan in Canto 321, the reception of the wandering guests involves moving them out of a strictly santri realm where, after the aděgan tĕtamuwan, an evening of religious learning and debate, punctuated by Sufi performances involving music, singing and dance, ending in the aděgan tilamwangi, filled with sex and perhaps some sleep, would normally be expected. Instead, in Canto 321, verse 40, on a night when the moon is full, the travelers step into the realm of the Adipati of Wirasaba where performances, religious observances, and sex assume new forms and take on additional meanings to those the reader might anticipate from conventional santri lĕlana stories. Here, as described until the end of Canto 323, there are musical and dance performances, scenes of village rĕbutan, and sex, episodes that are still recognizable as structurally appropriate for aděgan rĕrasan ngelmi and aděgan tilamwangi and still expressive of conventional religious meanings, but very different nonetheless because they are components of a kind of story that differs from what we expect to find in standard santri lĕlana discourse, or from Benedict Anderson's quite different reading of the poem.[32]

In his sociological analysis of the *Major Cĕnthini* Benedict Anderson interprets Cĕbolang's encounter with the Adipati of Wirasaba as a struggle between Javanese possessors of various kinds of specialized knowledge and the feudal overlords of Old Java (Anderson 1990). Once all the cultural and historical differences between Java and elsewhere are peeled away, Cĕbolang resembles a French intellectual during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Anderson argues, the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* being an "encyclopedia" different from but comparable to Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, which sought "to show that on almost any topic – from the nature of magnetism to the origins of language – the (mostly) commoner, lay cognoscenti 'knew more' than their putative social and religious superiors. In this sense, the *Encyclopédie* can usefully be understood as a weapon in the struggle between a professional, secular clerisy and the whole

32 Interestingly, Behrend notes that one of the creative innovations in Recension F of the *Sĕrat Jatiswara*, written in Surakarta in 1820, is the repeated alternation of *aděgan rĕrasan ngelmi* and *aděgan tilamwangi* before reaching the final *aděgan pamitan* (Behrend 1987: 275). The alternation between performance scenes and village crowd scenes involving sex in Canto 321, leading to an unusual aděgan tilamwangi involving Mas Cĕbolang, Nurwitri and the Adipati in Canto 323, is similar to the pattern observed by Behrend in Recension F of the *Sĕrat Jatiswara*.

structure of hegemony of the *ancien régime*" (1990: 273–74). Later in his essay, Anderson gives a detailed synopsis of Mas Cěbolang's sexual encounter with the Adipati in Canto 323, concluding that "[the] paired sodomies, with each partner alternately taking the role of penetrator and penetrated, shows that Cabolang is the master of his master. He is the skilled professional in every aspect of sexual intercourse between males, without ever losing his control or manhood … He forces his lord first into linguistic equality, then into sexual submission" (1990: 281–82).

Whether we think of the discourse of the *Major Cěnthini* in Behrend's terms, as a santri lělana tale structured out of sequences of aděgan that all contain conventional elements proper to each, or as an encyclopedic battle, with de Sadean flourishes, between the forces of Enlightenment and autocracy in Old Java, comparable to what took place in eighteenth-century France, the fact is that the stories being told in the *Sěrat Cěnthini* are not exactly what we would expect to find in either discoursive mode. The narrative in Canto 321, from verse 52 to verse 79, consists of not one but several stories. There is a story of Mas Cěbolang, the wandering young musician and dancer looking for adventure, and a story about the Adipati of Wirasaba, who has problems maintaining control over his villagers and his women. There is a story, nipped in the bud before it can even get started, of the merchant in all his finery who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. And there are, most especially developed, with the greatest number of verses, the most vividly and varied action-packed descriptions, the deepest forays into character development, stories about Dulsubur, his randy wife, and Jaemanis. There is a "tension," to use Woloch's word, between the discourse and the stories that are told, both those that span many cantos, like Mas Cěbolang's, or those that only come and go after a few verses, but which could have gone on for much longer if the poet had decided to keep telling them. "To read characters in narrative," Woloch writes, "we need to read the dialectical tension between the formal distribution of attention within the discourse and the potential patterning of distribution within the story" (2003: 41).

The characters in our passage that are the most "at odds with, or divergent from, the formal pattern of attention in the discourse" (2003: 41) are Dulsubur, Ni Subur and Jaemanis. Both Cěbolang and the Adipati are congruent with either Behrend's or Anderson's version of what defines the discourse. But the three minor characters emerge out of the anonymous crowd and create new character-spaces, redirecting our attention toward possible narrative pathways and destinations that lie beyond the discursive boundaries of the *Major Cěnthini*.

FIGURE 2.2 The *kacu mas*, or "golden handkerchief," the pyramid-shaped box, described as a "handkerchief box" by J. Groneman 1895: 81, was one of the eight insignia (*upacara*) of royal rank in the courts of central Java, carried and displayed in processions.
PHOTO TAKEN FROM GRONEMAN 1895, PLATE VII

Of course, we can also read what happens to Ni Subur and Jaemanis in terms of homilies about women that are found in many places in the *Cĕnthini*. And the little story about Jaemanis, whose finery and pride are *dirĕbut* (seized), could be cited as an example of rĕbutan that has important political as well as religious echoes elsewhere in the text. It would be possible, in other words, to recuperate these minor characters for either version of the discourse and pigeonhole them there, turning them into mere adornments and fillips.

But their appearance in the narrative, like that of the fleeing lĕbe and his family in the illustration on folio page 44v in MSS Jav 89, does more to disrupt and diversify the discourse than to adorn or reinforce it. These characters suggest new narrative possibilities. In Canto 323, Jaemanis suddenly reappears, her story continuing for a few more verses. We learn new things about her home situation and about her character before she disappears again, this time for good.

After Cĕbolang and Nurwitri finish their dalliance with the Adipati, they return to the Kauman (the neighborhood surrounding the mosque where santri live). They pay a visit to Ki Jamali, who was the first to welcome them to Wirasaba at the beginning of Canto 321, and make a gift of the clothes and money they have received from the grateful Adipati. Meanwhile, Cĕbolang

spends his days in debauchery (*/Mas Cĕbolang tan suda balunthahneki, / sayamber angĕlantrah. //*).[33] The metre in the following verses is *Dhandhanggula* (10i, 10a, 8e (o), 7u, 9i, 7a, 6u, 8a, 12i, 7a).

94. Aneng jawi wus sadasa ari
Mas Cĕbolang wus arang kĕpalang

apulang yun lan bedhange
mitra pawestri manggung
nama Jaemanis mantĕsi
pĕthĕl maring pondhokan
ejlek siyang-dalu
saběn-saběn tinimbalan
pan kĕpanggih aneng pondhokanireki
Cĕbolang Pakauman ||

94. Already out and about for ten days,
Mas Cĕbolang was seldom held back from
passionate sex and love making.
His lady friend was the maid
Jaemanis, the perfect beauty.
Never once missed meeting up,
back and forth, day and night,
every time she had been summoned
he would receive her in the lodging where he stayed,
Cĕbolang of Kauman.

95. Pan binĕndon kongsi den-gĕbugi

suprandene nora tobat-tobat
maksih ambĕlĕbĕt bae
irimban siyang-dalu
Jaemanis memanas ati
malah kagunganira
kathah icalipun
arta busana sandenya
asring Jaemanis ingkang nyonyolongi
sinungkĕn Mas Cĕbolang ||

95. She brought down his[34] anger, even beaten,
but nevertheless she did not repent,
but just bandaged her injuries,
her eye on things day and night.
Jaemanis became quite annoyed,
so that of his possessions
quite a lot went missing,
money and clothes and his *sarong*.
Often it was Jaemanis who stole them,
given to Mas Cĕbolang.

96. Samajade Mas Cĕbolang sugih

pan cinatur manggung sĕlir samya

ingkang wus wawuh waune

agung pawewehipun
busanarta lan buratwangi

ingkang dadya jaruman

96. Naturally Mas Cĕbolang became rich.
It was said all the young servants and wives,
those who once were friendly with him,
showered him with lovely gifts,
clothes and money and flowery sachets.
The one who was go-between

33 Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 28, v. 93.
34 That is, the Adipati's wrath.

Jamal rabinipun	was the wife of Jamal.
nyai Jamal langkung bisa	Nyai Jamal was good at this,
luwih dhangan duk ĕnome dadya ringgit	more than willing as a girl to be a dancer,
sinĕlir ki dipatya ||[35]	one of the Adipati's wives.

Even as he adds a coda to the story of Jaemanis, the poet can't resist beginning another story about Nyai Jamal. One minor character begets another!

In both of her appearances, what Jaemanis does and what is revealed about her as a person draw the reader's attention away from the two main male characters who dominate her and who are supposed to be at the center of our attention. While they seem to have interesting stories of their own to tell, Ni Subur and Jaemanis also offer streetwise parodies of the culminating adĕgan tilamwangi enounters between the Adipati and the visiting dancers that Anderson analyzes in his essay. The sodomizing gang rape of Ni Subur and the *lèse majesté* committed against the Adipati when Jaemanis is stripped naked, not to mention her own parody of his *adigang*[36] pretensions as she preens and struts, are essential incidents that enable the poet to thicken the description (to adapt Clifford Geertz's famous phrase "thick description" and Woloch's "thickness of the narrative," 2003: 144–45) of Wirasaba; to people it with new narrative possibilities that challenge the centrality of Mas Cĕbolang and the Adipati in this episode; and to foreshadow, in a mocking way, the polico-sexual

35 Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 28.

36 "An arrogant display of one's superior power" (Robson and Wibisono 2002: 26). In addition to being aware of the overall political and cultural context of the writing of the *Major Cĕnthini* in 1815 (Day 2002: 126–36), it is worth reflecting on Peter Carey's discussion of the treaties signed between the British and the courts of central Java on 1 August 1812 (2008: 377–82). The third article in these treaties stipulated the British annexation of territories in the western and eastern provinces of the principalities. One of these was Wirasaba, belonging to Surakarta (see Map 4 in Carey 2008: 241). Carey comments: "The annexation of these eastern outlying provinces … meant that numerous – but not all – Yogya and Surakarta *bupati* lost their positions and livelihood, for the British government only wanted to retain officials from the rank of sub-district head (*demang*, *mantri désa*) downwards. Most of these *bupati* returned to the *kraton* where they eked out an impoverished existence … Only a few from the eastern *mancanagara* [outlying provinces] were reassigned to newly created – and much smaller – *kabupatèn* in Madiun. The grievances of these prematurely dismissed *bupati*, the so-called *bupati dhongkol* [fired *bupati*], encouraged many to join Dipanagara in 1825" (2008: 381). The characterization of the "Adipati of Wirasaba" in the *Major Cĕnthini*, where he is mocked as if he were already a *bupati dhongkol*, may offer the poet's comment on the annexation of Wirasaba by the British in 1812 or even mirror an actual Wirasaba *bupati dhongkol* eking out an impoverished, derisible existence in Surakarta, who served as a model for the character.

encounter between the Adipati and Cěbolang that Anderson analyzes in his essay.[37]

The sexual encounter between the Adipati, Nurwitri and Cěbolang reads like a comical parody of the mystical *kawula-gusti* (servant-lord) metaphor used, along with many others, to express the unitary identity of God and all existence, which is the realization of His "pure being" (*wujūd*) in bodily/material forms.[38] Zoetmulder quotes one of the many examples of the kawula-gusti concept found in Javanese Sufi poetry in the following excerpt from a scene of mystical instruction (by Amongraga to his new bride Tambangraras; Kamajaya 1985–91, 6: 209–11, Canto 368, v. 37–56) in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*: "There is no

37 The satire of the aristocracy, its culture and *mores*, in the Wirasaba episode we have been discussing offers a critique of social inequality, with intimations of social rebellion, in the poem, as Anderson shows. It may also reflect, in a playful way, the mystical Sufi perspective on human affairs that is repeatedly enunciated throughout the poem. A forcefully explicit, nearly contemporaneous statement of Muslim egalitarianism that has both political and mystical implications was expressed by Dipanegara's pious great-grandmother, Ratu Agĕng, in her dying words to her son, the second sultan of Yogyakarta, on 17 October 1803: "'Sultan! The path I have to lay aside is difficult and now I feel that I am essentially no more than an ordinary person. My son, keep that in view and do not believe that, although you are now ruler, after your death you will be anything more than a common coolie [Jav. *batur*]. So, live accordingly!'" (Carey 2008: 81). For a discussion of Ratu Agĕng's Shaṭṭāriyya *silsilah* (Sufi lineage) and her influence on Dipanagara, see Fathurahman 2018: 54–57. Ratu Agĕng traced her line to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Muḥyī of Karang Saparwadi (now Pamijahan, West Java, where his tomb is still a popular pilgrimage destination), "the main *murshid* [Sufi master] of the Shaṭṭārīyah Sufi order in West Java" (Fathurahman 2016: 50). The protagonist of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, Amongraga, also traces his Sufi *silsilah* to "Karang" and receives the name "Amongraga" there. The poem says his teacher is named Kyai Agĕng Karang Seh Ibrahim Ibnu (Kamajaya 1985–91, 1: 67, Canto 50, v. 4; 1: 203–207, Canto 58, v. 22–49 – Canto 59, v. 1–2; 5: 51–53, Canto 333). Cĕbolang also has a "Karang" connection. On Mt. Sĕmeru he meets and studies mysticism with the ascetic Danadarma, who tells him that he himself has studied under Seh Kadir Jalena in Karang for three years together with Cĕbolang's father (Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 33–39, Canto 325, v. 6 – Canto 327, v. 14). The reverential way in which the poem's "Karang" is spoken about, especially as Amongraga introduces himself to his future bride's family in Wanamarta, makes it seem certain that the poetic place is meant to recall the most famous location of Shaṭṭāriyya learning in early nineteenth-century Java, Karang Saparwadi. For a different but equally awe-inspiring resonance of the place name "Karang" in the *Cĕnthini*, see Day 2021: 715, n. 10.

38 My thanks to Nancy Florida for helping me phrase this fundamental Sufi idea accurately; see also Meyer 2021: 687 and Florida 2019: 230. Florida says that the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* is "redolent" with the teachings of Shaṭṭāriyya Sufism, bearing witness to the "apparent prominence of the Shaṭṭāriyya among the Surakarta literati at the time of its composition" (2019: 234). For more on Sufism, and opposition to it, in Surakarta and Indonesia generally before the end of the nineteenth century, see Meyer 2021, Florida 2019, and the essays Azra 1999 and Steenbrink 1999.

Lord and no servant; there is both Lord and servant. The Lord has the attributes of the servant; the servant has the attributes of the Lord" (1995: 135). In Anderson's words, when Cěbolang and the Adipati have sex, "each partner alternately tak[es] the role of penetrator and penetrated," thereby erasing the distinction between male and female, kawula and gusti. In Amongraga's words, they become, in a seemingly quite profane but possibly also divine way, "two-in-one" (*rororning ngatunggal*; Zoetmulder 1995: 134; Kamajaya 1985–91, 6: 209, Canto 368, v. 38). The "mixing of servant and Lord" (*pamoring Gusti kawula*) is also communicated in the scene when Cěbolang speaks low Javanese with the Adipati.[39]

But, if there is a playful parody of mystical union in this scene, what explains the raunchy, carefully detailed physicality of the "servant" Cěbolang's parodic-mystical-egalitarian sexual dalliance with his "Lord"? The conventions of the adĕgan tilamwangi scene? Realism? Encyclopedism? The future Pakubuwana V's prurient interest in sex? Perhaps the poets of the *Major Cĕnthini* were just having fun writing about sex. All these explanations, taken singly or together, are plausible but not conclusive. Ricklefs comments on a passage from Canto 446 in which, in a state of mystical ecstasy, "Men and women mixed together, / whoever on top of anyone else, / just so they were naked /." He writes: "When excessive ecstatic mysticism and its attendant debauchery are depicted, they are the action of a sect of Muslims, those whom the Prophet describes as followers of the false *ngelmus* that mark the age of confustion" (2006: 204). Ricklefs is right about a strictly *sharī'a*-based perspective on such scenes, but the poets of the *Cĕnthini* held another view, one that was widely

39 As Meyer argues in her interpretation of the representation of Sunan Kalijaga in the nineteenth-century *Cariyosipun Seh Mlaya* from Surakarta (2021: 689) and this passage from the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* makes clear, Cěbolang's relationship with the Adipati could be interpreted as something of a mystical paradox. On the one hand, as Anderson says, Cěbolang is a "skilled professional," superior to the Adipati in every aspect of knowledge and physical performance. On the other hand, in mystical terms, he only confirms that superiority, like Sunan Kalijaga when he practices austerities in the forest, living and roaming with the wild deer, by his "submission, obedience, and seeming lowliness" (Meyer 2021: 681–82, 689) during his visit to the Adipati's house with Nurwitri. Cěbolang is not just being deferential to the Adipati (and we know how much he flouts the Adipati's authority behind his back): he is also learning to abase himself before the authority of God. Cěbolang's whole experience in Wirasaba is part of the education he receives as he travels through Java as a santri lĕlana. His *Bildung* is finally completed when, after fleeing Wirasaba, he is given his final instruction in mystical knowledge by the ascetic Buyut Danadarma (Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 33–39 Cantos 325–27) and returns home to his parents in Sokayasa, "*karĕm marang kautaman*" (infatuated with Virtue; Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 39, Canto 327, v. 12, 39). See Florida's essay in this volume for Mas Cěbolang as a mature Sufi, married to Amongraga's sister.

prevalent in Sufi Islam before the ascendancy of puritanical Wahhabism in the nineteenth century. This view embraced the *sharīʿa* but also the role of music, dance, the sexualized human body, even "debauchery" in ecstatic Islamic mystical practices.[40] For a beautiful example of the kind of performative, sexualized Sufi worship espoused by the poets of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, see Florida's essay in this volume.

By introducing minor characters in Canto 321, the poets of the *Major Cĕnthini* made it possible for us to interpret the poem in a variety of ways, ones that include but are not restricted to interpretations that are predicated on a santri-lĕlana or Enlightenment-encyclopedic narrative discourse. Minor characters in the episode we've examined do not simply draw attention away from the main characters as they are defined in terms of the discursive regimes they represent. Nor do they only serve to satirize and thereby critique, albeit in a subservient way, the dominant discursive regimes of the poem and the social order those regimes mirror and uphold. The violent effects of Mas Cĕbolang's tĕrbang playing and mellifluous singing on the festival mob that rapes Ni Subur cast his centrality and the cultural dominance of the music he performs in another light, suggesting the opening scene in another kind of narrative, in which the high culture of the gusti class would be viewed and experienced from below, not as a subaltern kawula might do, meekly willing to become "one" with his or her Lord, but as a violent rebel against the aristocracy and its culture.[41] Ni Subur and Jaemanis "stand as potential, if submerged, forces of narrative interest and agency," as Woloch puts it (2003: 197). Potentially, they are anticipations of major characters in a different kind of literary work from a

40 Kugle 2007, especially Chapter 4. Commentators on descriptions of explicit, excessive sexual behavior in Javanese mystical poems, including the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, tend to explain them as expressions of residual Tantrism in Javanese religious belief rather than as well-known examples of Sufi devotional practices found in North Africa, Persia, and India, as well as Java (for example, see Zoetmulder 1995: 234–38 and Acri 2019). My thanks to Verena Meyer for calling my attention to Kugle's book and for encouraging me to think more about the influence of Sufism on depictions of sex in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*. Only further research will determine the extent to which the interest in "minor" characters and sexual relationships between fictional kawula and gusti in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* and other poems written in the Surakarta Kadipaten in this period reflected and was motivated by Sufi mystical thinking.

41 Musical performances and their social effects are represented in different ways in the *Major Cĕnthini*. In another passage, verses 9 and 10 of Canto 364, which I quote and discuss elsewhere (Day 2021) the effect of a gamelan performance on an anonymous crowd of villagers is sexually arousing, but also magically calming and instructive at the same time, reinforcing the beneficent authority of the village elite:

different political era, like a short story or novel written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer during the Indonesian Revolution or the New Order, for example.[42]

Alex Woloch's innovative analysis of minor characters and literary narrative opens new perspectives on the question of characterization and its role in generating narrative and realism in Javanese literature. Ni Subur, Jaemanis and their stories belong to a network of "minor," everyday women – wives, servants,

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9. Nulya mungĕl Kĕmbangmara	9. Then resounded *Kĕmbang Mara*,
Alun-jaladri ngrĕrangin	Ocean Waves ringing soft and sweet.
sakathahe kang miyarsa	Everyone who was listening,
jalwestri tyase mong brangti	men, women, was deeply lovestruck.
rĕmpĕg panabuhneki	The notes struck right together:
ukur jawil ngĕnut-ĕnut	measured touches one by one;
ungĕle kang anglola	sounds that were left abandoned:
rĕbab gambang lawan suling	*rĕbab gambang* and the *suling*;
sarancak ungĕle kamot jroning kawat	ensemble of sounds: contained in a single string.
10. Nganyut-anyut langkung raras	10. Swept along by sweetest music
kasmaran ingkang miyarsi	smitten were those who heard it.
lir mamrĕsing karasikan	As if squeezing out pure pleasure,
ĕngĕse ngĕkĕsi ati	moving, it caused hearts to tremble,
weh wilĕting malatsih	enhancing romantic desires,
lir winulang ing wulangun	like being taught sexual longing.
raosing tyas mangkana	The feeling was just like that
saking nyĕnyĕting kang gĕndhing	from the stillness of the *gĕndhing*.
nguyu-uyu ngrĕrantĕg dennya gamĕlan.	On and on the *gamĕlan* played without a pause.

The instruments being played, the ritual context, the time of day, and the type of gĕndhing are all different in the two gamelan performances, the one in Wirasaba, the other in Wanamarta. In addition, the instruments in Canto 364 are themselves supernaturally powerful. *Alun Jaladri* (Ocean Waves) is the gamelan set from Wirasaba that the Adipati (possibly the same character we meet in Canto 321) has given to Ki Panurta, the headman of Wanamarta and the father of Amongraga's bride, Tambangraras. Kunst (1973: 217) refers to a tĕrbang performance that takes place a day or two earlier during the wedding festivities in Wanamarta as part of a complex musical event involving tĕrbang, gamelan and dancing, in Canto 356, v. 217–308 (Kamajaya 1985–91, 5: 206–20). In this performance Jayengraga is the star tĕrbang performer. This passage and the one we have been examining from Canto 321 should be closely compared when the character-spaces of Cĕbolang (later Anggungrimang) and Jayengraga are analyzed. The two major characters exhibit differences that are as striking as their similarities, and they are both surrounded by minor characters who help define them.

42 Throughout this essay, in my attention to parody, the everyday, the futurity of the present, and the "unrealized surplus of humanness" in minor characters in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, there are echoes of M.M. Bakhtin's approach to what he calls the "novel." The possibility of "novelizing" the poem in Bakhtin's sense, it seems to me, is very real, but I can only hint at such a reading here. See Bakhtin 1981: 37, 39 and passim.

lusty sexual beings, and tellers of tales – that spans the entire *Major Cĕnthini*.[43] In this essay I have tried to show how minor characters perform a dual function in the poem, as potential "sources of interest and agency" in their own right (Woloch 2003: 197) and as drivers of the main narrative. The form of that narrative, as shaped by the agency of characters themselves, with their own, additional stories to tell, rather than by a mechanically conventional sequence of adĕgan in which characters appear as ornaments and fillips to a preordained plot, remains to be described. That can happen once the network of minor female characters has been connected to the whole "character-system" of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, which is the "arrangement" of all the characters who have generated "the unified narrative structure" of the poem as a literary masterpiece (Woloch 2003: 14). Notwithstanding Behrend's sidelining of characterization, it is his work on the *Cĕnthini* corpus and his exploration of the literary characteristics of the santri lĕlana genre that have made it possible to imagine the poem as "literature," rather than simply a uniquely encyclopedic hodge-podge of information on Javanese culture. Studying characterization and all other aspects of literary composition in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* will make it possible to locate the poem as literature on a continuum extending from ancient Javanese kakawin to novels written by Javanese authors in both Javanese and Indonesian in the modern period. And greater attention to characterization will also teach us more about religious and political thinking in early nineteenth-century Java and how ideas from that period influenced the writing of the text. Contrary to a view widely held in Javanese and Indonesian studies, fictional characters in Javanese literature, based, however indirectly, on real, thinking, religiously devout (or impious), and sexually active people in the everyday world, are centrally important for understanding how literary narratives in Java have been created and what they mean.

43 In addition to Nyai Cĕnthini herself, such female minor characters include: Niken Rarasati, the independent-minded wife of Jayengraga; Ni Atikah, a story-telling lady *ulama*; the wealthy "merry widow" Nyai Sĕmbada, patron of gamelan and insatiable lover; and the beautiful and talented Ni Pĕlangi, who is discussed by Nancy Florida in this volume. For a wonderful essay on literary representations of "sex wars" in nineteenth-century Surakarta, including a male phantasy-shattering incident in the *Major Cĕnthini*, see Florida 1996.

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CHAPTER 3

Better to Touch the Heart: Performing Sufi Songs (*Suluk*) in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*

Nancy K. Florida

Abstract

Opening with a discussion of a controversial painting by the contemporary Muslim cleric and artist, Mustofa Bisri, this essay reflects upon the role that artistic expression can play in the spiritual life of Javanese Muslims. The focus of the essay turns upon an exploration of the performance of Sufi poetry (*suluk*) in song and dance as it is portrayed in the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, an early nineteenth-century masterpiece of Javanese literature that narrates the imagined adventures of several seventeenth-century wandering students of Islamic religion (*santris*). These poems, activated through their performance by both men and women as a form of devotional practice, disclose the embodiment of spirit that characterized much of the metaphysical life of Javanese Sufis in earlier times and that still reverberates into the present.

Keywords

Islam in Java – *Cĕnthini* – Sufism – *suluk* – *rasa* – performance – embodiment

In early 2003 the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (Majelis Ulama Indonesia)[1] condemned the trademark "drilling dance" of the then wildly popular East Javanese *dangdut* artist[2] Inul Darutista (b. 1979). Calling for a ban

1 Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) was established by Soeharto's "New Order" government in 1975. Its primary function was to issue fatwas that would mobilize Muslim support for government policies (van Bruinessen 1990). Since the fall of the Soeharto government in 1998, the MUI has become increasingly conservative and has grown in strength, taking on the role as advocate and adjudicator of Muslim values in Indonesia.

2 *Dangdut* is a genre of Indonesian pop music that appears to form a synthesis of Bollywood, Arabic, and local folk musics. Dangdut performances often feature provocatively-clad female singer-dancers.

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of her performances in the Javanese heartland city of Yogyakarta, they deemed her dance to be a form of "pornoaksi." The "drill" (*ngĕbor*) consisted of a gyrating, grinding movement of the singer-dancer's hips. In the "Inulmania" that followed the condemnation, her popularity soared, and her erotic dance movements were widely criticized as exemplars of sinful Western decadence that were in violation of Indonesian Islamic standards (Weintraub 2008).

Inul's body became a lingering focus of discussion in the following years, as conservative, modernist Muslim legislators promoted passage of a national law against *pornografi* and *pornoaksi*. In 2006 Inul was called before the Indonesian congressional panel that framed Law 44 on Pornography; she famously left the room in tears after one of her fellow dangdut artists denounced her before the panel.[3] The pornography law was ultimately ratified in October 2008. Among the many things banned by the law is the performance of bodily movements (*gerak badan*), or dance, that exploit sexuality.[4]

At the time of the controversy, Inul was not without her clerical defenders, however. Among those condemning the 2003 fatwa of the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars was the late Abdurrahman Wahid (1940–2009), former President of Indonesia and former chairman of Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (or NU), which is said to number some 40 million members. Wahid, a self-proclaimed fan of Inul, declared that the fatwa banning her dance had misused religious precepts in order to suppress freedom of expression. Another cleric who entered into the Inul controversy at that time was A. Mustofa Bisri (or Gus Mus) (b. 1944), the head (or *kyai*) of a prominent traditional Muslim school (or *pĕsantren*) in Rembang, Central Java. Mustofa Bisri is one of Indonesia's most distinguished clerics: he has served both as deputy to the chairman and as chairman (Rais Aam Syuriah) of NU. Gus Mus is also a published poet and a painter. At the height of the Inul controversy, he produced a painting that he titled *Berdzikir Bersama Inul* (Performing *Zikir* with Inul). *Zikir* means "remembrance" and denotes devotional practices in remembrance of God, often through the repeated recitation of Islamic devotional utterances.[5]

3 It was the "dangdut king," Rhoma Irama, who defamed her.

4 Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2008 tentang Pornografi, Bab 1, Pasal 1, Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia No. 181 (2008), https://ngada.org/uu44-2008.htm, accessed December 28, 2020.

5 The recitation of formulae, such as the Islamic Confession (*syahadat*), is among the devotional practices of travelers along the mystical path, *tarekat* (Ar. *ṭarīqa* = path, way). "Tarekat" has come to denote "Sufi brotherhood or order" in modern usage.

FIGURE 3.1 A. Mustofa Bisri, *Berdzikir Bersama Inul* (Performing Zikir with Inul), 2003 (60 × 70 cm.)
WITH PERMISSION OF K.H.A. MUSTOFA BISRI

The focal point of the painting is an emphatically fleshy Inul, faceless and without any details of body or costume, in deep plié – presumably performing her drilling maneuver; rendered larger than life, she is frozen in the center of a circle of also-faceless *ulama* (Muslim scholars) that are said to be performing zikir. One of the ulama is the artist himself: we know this because an arrow and the word *aku* indicate that "this one is me." In March 2003, the painting was exhibited in the Grand Mosque of Surabaya as part of its Muharram "Making Life Beautiful" exhibition. There were arson threats – to Mustofa Bisri's home and pĕsantren and to the Grand Mosque itself. Fortunately, nothing came of any of these threats (*Tempo*, March 10, 2003).

It is reported that Bisri usually refuses to comment on the painting's meaning. He has, however, on occasion offered his interpretations, at one time noting that the painting was not meant to criticize Inul but rather to expose the empty piety of "the pious" who were attacking her. The painting was, he said, symbolic of *their* corrupt worldliness:

> The painting of Inul symbolizes the flesh. Many Indonesians attach too much importance to the flesh: praying five times a day, making the hajj

> every year – and yet they remain corrupt. There are some who perform zikir till breaking down in tears – and yet, their behavior never improves.[6]

Commenting on the painting's symbolic meaning in another context and at another time, he noted "that Indonesians in fact enjoy the flesh …," before continuing on, "and please do enjoy the flesh, but remember the spirit as well."[7]

I start off with this example, because when I began reading the Javanese poetic descriptions of imagined nights of Sufi zikir performances in a much earlier Java that form the focus of this essay, it was the image of Mustofa Bisri's painting that flooded my mind. But rather than seeing the picture as a critique of worldliness or of an over-emphasis on the flesh, I imagined it more as a depiction of the interrelationship of body and spirit that is so prominent in "classical" Javanese Sufi discourse and practice – perhaps more in keeping with the artist's second interpretive comment. I then came to wonder whether Gus Mus had been inspired, in part, by "memory shadows" of these now-erased devotional practices when he composed his painting. The posture of the (absent) woman he pictures in the center of the devotional circle, of which he is a participant, is in some ways more like that of a classical Javanese dancer than that of a raunchy dangdut performer. With her missing face and clothing, she appears ambiguous – both the abstraction of a female dancer and the manifestation of that dancer's material corporality. Mustofa Bisri's depiction of this figure is evocative of descriptions of a much earlier form of zikir practice that was performed together with dancing women, descriptions that are found in sung poetry that was composed in early nineteenth-century Java. In these earlier portrayals, intellect and desire, bodies and spirit come together to form the heart of devotional practices that can advance man's path to God.

1 *Suluk* (Sufi Songs) and the *Cĕnthini*

These early-nineteenth century descriptions of zikir give a sense of the earlier reading practices of classical Javanese texts that belong to a literary genre

6 "Lukisan Inul adalah simbol daging. Banyak orang di Indonesia lebih mengutamakan daging. Salatnya lima kali sehari, naik haji tiap tahun, tapi tetap saja malakukan korupsi. Ada yang berzikir sampai nangis-nangis, tapi perilakunya tidak menjadi lebih baik" ("Berdzikir Bersama Inul, Karya Lukisan KH. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus)," *Gus Dur Files*, Sunday, March 1, 2015), http://www.gusdurfiles.com/2015/03/berdzikir-bersama-inul-karya-lukisan-kh.html, accessed December 14, 2020.

7 "Itu simbol bahwa ternyata manusia Indonesia menyukai daging … Silakan menyukai daging, tapi ingat roh juga" (*Tempo*, 10 March 2003).

known as *suluk*.[8] Suluk literature is a form of poetry sung in Javanese *macapat* meters[9] for and by travelers along the mystic path. It is a poetic form that concerns the nature of the relationships between God and man, between the One and the many, and that often lingers on extended meditations on *tauhid* (the Unity of God). Suluk texts are at times composed in a manner that works to provoke the inexplicable *experience* of those relationships – the wonderment of the One that is not one, the two that are not two.

Having spent much of the past several years reading, contemplating, and translating suluk literature, I more recently turned to the renowned Javanese masterpiece, the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, to see what it might teach me about the genre. The *Cĕnthini* is an "encyclopedic" work of some 722 cantos of poetry that was composed in 1815[10] at the royal palace of Surakarta in Central Java by a collective of court poets. Commissioned and overseen by the Crown Prince who would later reign as Pakubuwana V (1785–1823; r. 1820–23), the collective was comprised of Ki Ng. Ronggasutrasna, R.Ng. Yasadipura II (a.k.a. R.T. Sastranagara [1756–1844]), and R.Ng. Sastradipura (a.k.a. Kyai Haji Muhammad Ilhar).[11] The *Cĕnthini* belongs to a larger genre of Javanese texts that concern tales of wandering *santris* (students of religion) in search of knowledge broadly defined. Recognized as one of the masterpieces of classical Javanese literature, it is an expansive and exuberant work that is noted for, among many other things, its contributions to suluk literature.[12]

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8 The word *suluk* (Ar. *sulūk*) also means "pathway," indicating the mystical path traversed by Sufis and aspirant Sufis.

9 Macapat is the most frequently used form of prosody in "classical" Javanese sung poetry. There are about a dozen different commonly used macapat verse forms. Each is governed by a formal structure that determines the number of lines per stanza and syllables per line (*guru wilangan*). Each of these verse forms also has a specific pattern of vowel endings for each of the lines (*guru lagu*). Different melodies, with different moods, are used to recite the different macapat verse forms.

10 The text is dated 26 Mukharam Je 1742 (7 January 1815) by the *condrasangkala* (chronogram): *paksa suci sabda ji* [2-4-7-1] (Kamajaya 1985–91, 1: 1).

11 Kamajaya, "Prawacana," in Kamajaya 1985–91, 1: iii–iv. According to Kamajaya, others involved in the work were Pangeran Jungut Mandurarĕja (*pradikan krajan* Wangga, Klaten, Surakarta), Kyai Kasan Bĕsari (kyai of the Gĕbangtinatar pĕsantren in Panaraga), and Kyai Muhammad Minhad (*ulama agung* in Surakarta), Kamajaya 1985–91, 1: iv. See also Sumahatmaka 1981, 149–50.

12 For a sense of the exuberance of the *Cĕnthini,* a good place to start is Tony Day's recent work, including his fascinating contribution to this volume. But see also his recent analysis of, among other things, the narrative's minor characters and its depictions of musical performance (Day 2021). For a work that discusses the theological significance of a number of the *suluk* passages in the *Cĕnthini*, see Zoetmulder 1995.

FIGURE 3.2 *Kĕntrungan*
FROM PALMER KEEN, "DRUMS OF JAVA, PT. 2," *AURAL ARCHIPELAGO: FIELD RECORDINGS FROM AROUND INDONESIA*, WITH PERMISSION

For the most part, suluk texts in the *Cĕnthini* appear in narrative sequences that are set in rural pĕsantren; they often form learned dialogues among its wandering santris and other Sufi sages. A great number of the texts are plucked – and abbreviated – from other earlier exemplars of suluk. It was when I was combing the *Cĕnthini* for such narrative sequences that I found the specific poetic representations of embodied spiritual practice in artistic *performance* that brought Mustofa Bisri's painting to my mind. Towards the very end of this remarkable epic are several distinct narrative sequences that describe, in detail, devotional performances of suluk in song and dance by and for mixed groups of male and female travelers across Java and, at least for some of them, on the path to God. In these poetic depictions, the performance of these Sufi texts, as zikir, are accompanied by ensembles of frame drums called *tĕrbang* and *kĕntrung*.[13] This essay will explore one of these performances.

13 The tĕrbang are the smaller frame drums; the kĕntrung, the larger. See Kunst 1949, 1: 216–18. For a description of a *kĕntrungan* performance in 1980s East Java, see Brakel-Papenhuyzen 2004.

2 A Quick Caveat

A caution: you will see that there are elements in the devotional performance depicted in these passages that could lend themselves to the tired old argument that "traditional" Javanese Islam is not real Islam – that it is a deviant form, strangely alien from an imagined central, stable, normative Islam. I am convinced that a historically sensitive, textually dense analysis of the practices depicted as *sunna* (normative or recommended, in congruence with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad) by this courtly Javanese nineteenth-century poetic collective could – if it were carried out in comparison with other (similar and dissimilar) devotional practices across the Muslim world that have, across time, also been hailed as sunna – effectively dispel that tired old argument which has sought to dismiss "Javanese Islam" as a peculiarly syncretic oddity.[14] Such an analysis is, alas, beyond the constraints of this little essay – and beyond my competence. So, the best I can do here is to raise the caution.

3 The *Cĕnthini*'s Narrative Frames

So, first on the *Cĕnthini*: the poem, one of Java's most well-known and little read works of literature, comprises an imaginative narrative of the adventures of the children of the last great Saint of Giri, ruler of an important sixteenth- and seventeenth-century East Javanese polity that was led by a "dynasty" of distinguished clerics. When, in 1636, the Lord of Giri was defeated and captured by the ascendant sultan of the Central Javanese kingdom of Mataram, it is said that three of his children (two sons and a daughter) escaped. It is their stories that are among the most prominent that the poem relates. Having been separated in flight, the three wander across the Javanese landscape in search of one another, having countless adventures along the way while visiting myriad sacred and haunted places across the land, especially the small rural Muslim pĕsantren of a series of ulama and Sufi sheikhs.[15]

The hero of this epic poem is the eldest of the three, who eventually takes the name Sheikh (*Seh*) Amongraga (the name means "He who Nurtures

14 For an extended and intelligent recent study of how the Prophet's sunna is articulated variously over time in different Muslim cultural, political, and historical contexts (including 19th to 21st-century Java), see Alatas 2021. In a forthcoming article I argue that Islam in early modern Java is better construed as "dialogic encounter" than as "syncretism" (Florida, forthcoming).

15 For more on pĕsantren as sites for the cultivation of Islamic knowledges in 19th-century Java, see Ronit Ricci's contribution to this volume.

the Body")[16] and distinguishes himself in theological, and especially Sufi, discourses with the many ulama and sheikhs that he encounters along the way. His younger siblings, the youth Mangunarsa (Awakening Desire)[17] and his little sister Rancangkapti (Shaping the Will), having been separated from their elder brother – their wanderings are, in part, in search of him, are only reunited with him toward the end of this thousands-of pages-long poem. After many adventures and a discipleship to a prominent sheikh, Amongraga comes to marry Tambangraras (Bringing together in Bliss *and* Forsaking Pleasure),[18] who is later known as Selabrangti (Diamond of Love); she is the learned daughter of the respected ulama and Sufi kyai, Ki Bayi Panurta of Wanamarta (Forest of Coolness). Amongraga initiates her into the mysteries both of metaphysical Sufism and of the erotic arts before continuing on his way. When her two brothers Jayengrĕsmi (Master of Beauty)[19] and Jayengraga (Master of the Body), and much later Tambangraras and her servant, Cĕnthini,[20] go in search of the

16 The names of the characters almost always bear significant discursive meaning, often suggesting the content (or hoped-for content) of the person's character. As was the case in traditional Java, a person takes a new name as he enters into different station of life. Before being granted the name Amongraga by his teacher Ki Agĕng Karang, the young man was known Raden Jayengrĕsmi (Master of Love).

17 As a younger man, Mangunarsa was known as Raden Jayengsari (Master of Beauty or of Essences).

18 The name Tambangraras has a number of possible glosses with widely divergent meanings. Tambangraras can be understood as "Tying [hearts] together in Love," "Bringing together in Bliss," and/or as "Forsaking Beauty/Pleasure." One meaning of the word *tambang* (ng. *tali*) is "cord" or "rope;" in compounds, *tambang* (or *tali*) can indicate the sometimes-reciprocal tying together of two or more things (for example, *talirasa*, "the thing, or energy, or person that ties hearts together" and *tambangaksi*, "gazing into each other's eyes, as lovers"). At the same time, the verbal form of the word *tambang* (i.e., *nambang*) also denotes almost the converse, that is "to abandon one's wife without divorcing her." The word *raras* glosses as "bliss," as "beauty," as "the experience of love," and as "the experience of beauty/pleasure." The name Tambangraras, then, can mean either "Bringing or tying [hearts] together in Love or in Bliss" or "Forsaking Beauty/Pleasure" – or all of these in unstable alternation. These alternative understandings of the name perhaps signify the change of status that the character Tambangraras undergoes – from beloved wife and daughter in the earlier portions of the epic to forsaken woman after Amongraga does indeed abandon her almost directly after consummating their marriage. In her new status, Tambangraras treads an ascetic path forsaking the experience of pleasure when she takes off in search of her husband. I am grateful to Tony Day for engaging in the discussions that led to my appreciation of this proliferation of meanings.

19 As a younger man, Jayengrĕsmi was known as Jayengwesthi (Master of Danger).

20 Unlike many of the other proper names in the *Cĕnthini*, the name "Cĕnthini" does not appear to have a discursive meaning. It is notable that the title of the entire work is named for her (or sometimes for her mistress, Tambangraras). Perhaps the title reflects the position of the character Cĕnthini (and Tambangraras) as audience for Amongraga's

missing groom, the stories of their wanderings become intertwined with those of the three children of Giri. A third narrative strand, also concerning a wandering santri, is woven together with the previous two. It concerns the adventures of Ki Anggungrimang (Always Longing), formerly known as Mas Cěbolang (He Who Steals Away), who, aptly, steals away from his father's pěsantren of Sokayasa to embark upon his spiritual and amorous journeys, eventually to marry Rancangkapti.[21]

Towards the end of this many thousands-of-pages-long poem, the protagonist Sheikh Amongraga establishes his own pěsantren on the south coast of Java. When he retreats into meditation in his newly constructed mosque, his two trusted attendants lead his thousands of followers into wildly antinomian forms of devotional practice.[22] Once word of the community's outrageous transgressions of the Prophet's law (or *sharīʿa*) comes to the ears of the Sultan, he, as caliph and protector of the faith, orders their leader's execution. This has been our hero's plan all along: Amongraga longs for the separation from the world that comes with death and willingly enters an iron cage that is poised to be swept into the sea. The locked cage is carried into the depths, but presently returns to shore – with Syeikh Amongraga's *salam* resounding in the heavens. And the cage is empty.

But the separation from the world of Amongraga (or "He Who Nurtures the Body") is not final; he is to reappear in the closing portion of the *Cěnthini*. Emerging from divine Mystery in bodily form, the spirit-body of Amongraga returns finally to meet his siblings, his wife, her brothers, and the wandering Anggungrimang to offer them his final teachings and guidance in matters of Islamic thought and practice. It is fragments from a passage that belongs to this ascendant stage of the narrative that will be discussed below.

4 A Night of Sufi Devotions in Seventeenth-Century Java as Imagined at the Early Nineteenth-Century Palace of Surakarta

It was in this form of embodied spirit that Amongraga enters into a remarkable narrative passage on suluk performance that I encountered while combing

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teachings – like the audience of the book itself. Tony Day has drawn my attention to an article by P.J. Zoetmulder (1939) that reinforces my supposition.

21 I am reading *cěbolang* as an intensification of the word *cěblang*.

22 The followers of these antinomian practices were called *santri dul*. For more on these practices, including their use of song and dance, see Sumarsam 1995: 35–38, and Cohen 2011. Cohen, in addition to discussing the santri dul in the *Cěnthini* episode, also provides an extended description and analysis of contemporary *brai* performance in Cirebon.

through the *Cĕnthini*. This passage, which will form the heart of this essay, comprises canto 691 of the 722-canto composition; composed in over 1500 lines of Asmarandana verse,[23] the passage constructs a description, in detail, of a single night of devotions performed by a mixed group of men and women travelers along the Sufi path. For a complete cast of characters in this excerpt, see appendix below. Beginning with Qur'anic interpretation, the night proceeds to readings of sacred tales of Islam in Arabic and the performance of Arabic praise songs (*slawatan*) – to climax with the singing of Javanese Sufi poetry (that is, suluk) by a series of women and men who, one by one, rise in the circle of Sufi practitioners to recite the allusive poetry of mystical union as their voices soar and bodies move to the musical accompaniment of the tĕrbang and kĕntrung frame drums.

The setting is Ardi Pala (Mount Merit), a small rural pĕsantren, imaginatively located in the East Javanese mountains south of present-day Surabaya. Owing to a series of coincidences, as night falls it comes to pass that *almost* the entire cast of wanderers has finally come to be gathered together at the home of Malangkarsa (Impeding the Will), the kyai of the pĕsantren. The brothers Jayengrĕsmi and Jayengraga together with their wives have been stopping there on their way to their father's pĕsantren Wanamarta (Forest of Coolness). Then Amongraga's younger brother Mangunarsa, now the kyai of the pĕsantren Wanantaka (Forest of Death), arrives. He is accompanied by Anggungrimang and his wife Rancangkapti, along with Cĕnthini and her husband Monthel. Most of the extended family has gathered – all save Amongraga and Tambangraras. The evening opens with Mangunarsa's interpretive reading of the well-known Qur'anic verse, so beloved by Sufis, "Everything is annihilated except His Face" (Qur'an 28: 88).

Then, as the full moon rises, the assembled travelers take up frame drums and begin to play and sing. They join the people of Mt. Merit in a slawatan performance, which, Malangkarsa tells them, is the local custom (*adat*) *and* a form of *normative* Islamic practice ("sunna").[24]

23 The metrical form of the seven-line Asmarandana verse is: 8i, 8a, 8é/o, 8a, 7a, 8u, 8a. The dominant "mood" of Asmarandana verse is plaintive, suggestive of sorrow or longing, including romantic or erotic longing. All the passages presented and translated in this essay are from canto 691.

24 A practice that is sunna is a normative or recommended Islamic practice, one that is considered congruent with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad. In Javanese, the Arabic sunna is rendered as *sunat*.

Seh Malangkarsa ngling aris	Sheikh Malangkarsa said softly,
yayi puputing rarasan	"To experience ultimate meaning (*rarasan*), my friends,[25]
pěněde sunat sěsamben	most meet are sunna that entertain –
wawi sami tarěbangan	so let us hold a tĕrbangan,
salawat pujining Hyang	a slawatan in praise of our Lord;
yayi ing riki wus tĕmtu	for this, my friends, is truly
adate ing Ngardipala	the adat here on Mount Merit."

Cĕnthini 691: 49, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 6

As we shall see, slawatan on Mt. Merit consisted of the performance both of joyous Arabic praise songs to the Prophet Muhammad and of Javanese suluk. For the people there the slawatan was the preferred form of zikir – one that should be performed in song (and sometimes dance) to the accompaniment of frame drums. As the rural Sufi Malangkarsa explains to his noble guests, it is through musical performance in the devotional practice of slawatan that the senses of suluk are best brought into both human understanding and human experience:

Kang dados pangatĕr dikir	To accompany our zikir
ing ngriku mung kakĕntrungan	there is none but *kakĕntrungan* (frame drum performance)
lawĕding ngelmu – rasane	that kneads together the knowledge of *rasa* (feeling, meaning, sense, taste)
alambar suluk panamar	upon a foundation of esoteric suluks
sĕmuning rasa jatya	the subtle sense of true rasa
bungkaking kanĕnganipun	the opening to clarity
pangojratira Hyang Sukma	the presencing of God.

Cĕnthini 691: 50, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 6

Our understanding of this stanza, and the one above, rests upon an understanding of the polysemic Javanese term *rasa*. "Rasa" indicates the place, or better the *experience* in and through which something outside – say, an idea – is taken inside, incorporated or ensouled by the one who has that rasa. It is meaning and feeling and sense and taste and mystery: through it, ideas and

25 *Rarasan* can, and I think does here, indicate the articulation and experience of supra-discursive meaning (from the root *rasa* and referring back to the discussion [*rarasan*] of the Qur'anic verse) and experienced delight of the articulation of that meaning in song (from the root *raras*).

emotions come to touch, transform, and move the heart. Performing suluk in music and dance cultivates that rasa, thereby allowing for an opening to clarity that prepares the self to come into the presence of the divine. Translated as "presencing" above is the word *pangojrat*. The root *ojrat* (from the Arabic *ujrat*) means "recompense, return, requital, price, payment" (Wehr 1976: 5). According to Gericke-Roorda (1901, 1: 148), the Javanese "ojrat" names slawatan performances that tell of the rewards and punishments of the afterlife.[26] But in his encyclopedic survey of the Javanese performing arts, Pigeaud (1938: 315) speculated that "ojrat" could, instead, be a Javanized sounding of the Arabic *ḥaḍra*, the presence or presencing of God through devotional practice.[27]

When the slawatan on Mt. Merit commences, the sounds of the drums and of the men's and women's voices ring out across the countryside in the night air.[28] Hearing these voices and the music of the kĕntrungan, scores of villagers stream to the pĕsantren to join in the devotions. They too lift their voices in song. The poem lingers on the description of the arriving village girls – lovely and eager to attract the attentions of the noble young wanderers who have come together at the humble home of the village kyai (691: 55–61).

It is only after this host of singing humanity has assembled at the village mosque that Amongraga makes his appearance, materializing out of Mystery in bodily form. Effused in light, the sight of him is nearly overwhelming, and all fall silent. He is accompanied by his wife Tambangraras and their disciple Ragasmara (Body of Love) (691: 63–71). After exchanging greetings with family and friends, Amongraga charges the company to continue with their devotions, but he specifically requests that the singers of the slawatan texts add dance to their song.

26 Willem van der Molen has pointed out to me that *kojrat* is also an alternative form of *kojat* (story) and *ojat* (fame).

27 Pigeaud provides a fine description of a similar night of slawatan from a different passage of the *Cĕnthini* that narrates the wedding festivities of Amongraga and Tambangraras (1938: 309–11). Many, but not all, of the same characters present in this passage are also present in the passage we discuss. All the slawatan performers at the wedding feast are male.

28 It is of course notable that all the performances discussed in this chapter are done by men and women together – and that prominent among the reciters of suluk are women. All this would be foreign in most of today's Java, where most slawatan are performed by men – with some "girl groups," especially in the context of contests. Nevertheless Matthew Cohen (2011) demonstates that mixed performance – with women dominant – is consistent with contemporary *brai* performance of tĕrbangan/slawatan in Ceribon.

Seh Amongraga nauri	Syeikh Amongraga answered,
lah yayi mara tutugna	"Come, my brother, continue with
sunat dadi pamujine	the sunna that is [your] worship.
samya kakĕntrungan ojrat	Let us perform *kĕntrungan ojrat*,
utama dhinulĕngan	best performed in song and dance (*dhinulĕngan*)[29]
anjujunun ing Hyang Agung	intoxicated with the Lord,
apupuji linagonan	worship rendered in song."

Cĕnthini 691: 72, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 8

It is Amongraga, then, who determines that the best or most noble (*utama*) articulation of this sunna is its performance in ecstatic song and dance that is done in worship of God. The rest of the night is spent almost entirely in solo, or sometimes duet or trio, singing performed in turns by members of the assemblage, usually with dance, always to the accompaniment of the tĕrbangs and kĕntrung. What they sing, for the most part, are abbreviated versions of oracular Javanese suluk. Suluk comprise songs that write allusively of the nature of man (body and spirit), often exploring the potential of human perfection in and through God. They frequently pose questions that concern the relationship between, and the paradoxical organic unity of, apparent binaries – among these: inside and outside, body and spirit, death and life, and ultimately, the defining relationship between God and man.

5 Ni Pĕlangi's Performance

The first to perform is Ni Pĕlangi (Ms. Rainbow), a beautiful young woman who is married to Malangkarsa's associate Modang. Modang is a kĕntrung performer and ulama – that is, he is a professional *dhalang kĕntrung*[30] whose day job it is to teach in the village pĕsantren. Pĕlangi, an experienced and talented performer, is also an inveterate flirt. Indeed, she is a veritable body of desire: herself nearly consumed by her palpable desire for the one of noble wanderers (Jayengraga), her body and voice in turn become the site where the desires of men are awakened. Pĕlangi is accompanied by an ensemble of four tĕrbang

29 *Dhulĕng* is a form of worship characterized by men and women, in solo or duet, performing the mystical poetry of Java in song and dance in a company of worshippers. The form will be discussed further below. The word *dhulĕng* does not appear in any dictionary that I have consulted.

30 The word *dhalang* usually denotes the puppeteer in an all-night Javanese *wayang* shadow-play. A *dhalang kĕntrung* is the lead performer of a kĕntrungan group or, in contemporary East Java, the one who relates the tale while performing on a *kĕntrung* drum.

and one kĕntrung; the players are the ulama of Mt. Merit. The frame drums resound; the song is begun, in the *sĕkar gadhung* style.[31]

Anulya Nimbok Pĕlangi	Then Nimbok Pĕlangi,
sumandhing ing priyanira	seated beside her husband,
nulya alĕkas bawane	forthwith began the *bawa*[32]
lagon Sĕkar Gadhung mĕmbat	in Sĕkar Gadhung lilting,
la ilahaha ilalah	"*La ilahaha ilalah*
Mukamadun kabibbuhu	*Mukamadun kabibbuhu*
padakammad salalaha	*padakammad salalaha*."[33]

31 The *sĕkar gadhung* form here appears to indicate a vocal *cengkok* (phrasing); it also names a style or form of tĕrbangan, a melody (*lagu*) or musical piece (*gĕndhing*), and a drum style. On *gĕndhing tĕrbangan,* see *Cĕnthini* canto 231: 2–5 (Kamajaya 1985–91, 3: 236–37). The poets tell us that many of the forty-four "gĕndhing slawatan" that they name in this passage had already been forgotten at the time that the *Cĕnthini* was composed; sĕkar gadhung was among the few remaining gĕndhing. It is almost (?) always *lagu sĕkar gadhung* that is mentioned as the selected melodic style in *Cĕnthini* slawatan performances. See also Padmasusastra's *Bauwarna*, where *sĕkar gadhung* is identified as a form of *kĕndhangan* (drumming) (*Sĕrat Bauwarna Jawa* Vol. 1, *Ha dumugi Ka* [Surakarta, 1898–1910]; MS RP 305, 319). A transliteration of this MS is available on Sastra.org, accessed February 25, 2021: https://www.sastra.org/bahasa-dan-budaya/adat-dan-tradisi/592-bauwarna-padmasusastra-1898-205-jilid-15-ka. Several gĕndhing Sĕkar Gadhung or *cengkok* Sĕkar Gadhung are to be found in Warsapradongga's 1915 *Buku Santiswara*, available on Sastra.org, accessed February 25, 2021, https://www.sastra.org/bahasa-dan-budaya/karawitan/2778-santiswara-warsapradonggo-1915-629-bagian-1. For notes on the revival of the Santi Swara/Laras Madya tĕrbangan form at the turn of the 20th century on the order of Surakartan patih Sasradiningrat IV and the direction of R.M.H. Sumaningrat and Ki Dĕmang Warsapradongga, see Karyarujita (b. 1867), *Lapuran Gĕndhing Santiswara: Wulangan saking Sumaningratan* (Surakarta 1907–08); MS. Radya Pustaka (RP) 386. We learn in this codex that this was the second revival of the form: the original form, attributed to the 17th-century ruler Sultan Agung, fell into disuse and was first revived in the early 19th century by Pakubuwana V, one of the authors (and the patron) of the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* that was composed in 1815 under his commission.

32 Technically the *bawa* is the sung introduction to a musical piece, but often in the *Cĕnthini* it appears to mean simply "to sing" or "song."

33 The first two of the final three lines of the stanza form a variant of the Muslim confession of faith, "There is no god, but God / Muhammad is his beloved." The Javanized Arabic of the third line is more difficult to decipher; a possible reading could be "praise and God's blessings be upon him" (for suggestions on the possible meanings of this third line, my thanks to Verena Meyer and to an anonymous reviewer). In a manuscript witness of the *Cĕnthini* stored in the library of the Mangkunagaran Palace that was inscribed by the Mangkunagaran courtier and *Cĕnthini* scholar R.M.Ng. Sumahatmaka, the final line reads, "pan Mukhamad salalaha" (for God's blessing are upon Muhammad) (Ronggasutrasna *et al.* (1815). *Suluk Tambangraras Jilid XII: Selamaya, Jatiswara, Telamaya* [*Sĕrat Cĕnthini*], inscribed by R.M.Ng. Sumahatmaka, Surakarta, ca. 1931, MS. Rĕksa Pustaka P 23 l, MN 342, 5). The same line in a third manuscript witness, this one stored in the Radya Pustaka

Tinampan keh naurani	Responding in chorus were many;
swara jalwestri araras	the voices of the men and women, lovely,
arĕmpĕg tan na sarĕnten	all together in unison
kĕntrung tarĕbang barungan	together with the kĕntrung and the tĕrbangs,
guměr ramya kapyarsa	resonant, clamorous to be heard:
[*pong-pĕg*] *pong-brung, pong-pĕg pong-brung*	"*Pong-pĕg pong-brung, pong-pĕg pong-brung*
thung-plĕg thung-plĕg, dhung pung-pung brang	*thung-plĕg thung-plĕg, dhung pung-pung brang*."

Cĕnthini 691: 76–77, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 8–9[34]

Aside from the onomanapoetic drum notes and the name of the song form, we have no way of knowing precisely what the performance sounded like, even though in the following stanza Pĕlangi's penetrating voice is likened to the sound of a tuned bamboo "whistle" attached to a kite that is soaring in the wind. But to have a sense of voice and drums in Javanese performance genres related to this now apparently vanished devotional form of suluk recitation, one can access contemporary audio and video recordings of kĕntrungan performances that are available online. For a woman's vocal performance – perhaps as lovely as that of Pĕlangi – there is a video recording of "Ngentrung Janeng Putri Sejati" in the village of Langse, Pati.[35] The ethnomusicologist Palmer Keen has produced a fine audio recording of a performance of the male kĕntrungan ensemble, Grup Slawatan Surya Muda, of Kali Bening, Banyumas, Central Java.[36] To view a men's choral performance, see the charming video recorded in Kalisasak, Banyumas.[37]

Ni Pĕlangi begins her performance: rising to her feet, she adjusts her breast cloth and sings as she moves to the rhythm of the frame drums (one of which is now wielded by Amongraga himself); her dance is sensual. I imagine her,

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Museum, reads, "madun Mukamad salalah" (blessed Lord Muhammad) (Ronggasutrasna *et al.* (1815). *Sĕrat Cĕnthini Wanantaka – Jurang Jangkung*), inscribed Surakarta, [late 19th century], MS Radya Pustaka ((RP) 323B, 346).

34 There is a scribal omission in line 6 of verse 77 of the Kamajaya edition; the inserted *pong-pĕg* is from the Sumahatmaka *Cĕnthini* manuscript (Sumahatmaka ca. 1931, 5).

35 "Ngentrung Janeng Putri Sejati desa Langse," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNq8ngdtME, accessed February 10, 2021.

36 This 2016 recording, which is provided with informative liner notes and photographs, is to be found in Keen's "Drums of Java, Pt. 2," *Aural Archipelago: Field Recordings from around Indonesia*, accessed February 10, 2021, https://www.auralarchipelago.com/auralarchipelago/slawatan.

37 "Solawatan Jawa: Kaliontong, Kalisalak, Kebasen, Banyumas," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u2ZjSW6LMQ, accessed February 10, 2021.

like the figure in Bisri's painting, a woman in the middle of a circle of ulama, body inclined, bending low in a deep plié, hips prominent. Her voice, a pure soprano, is clear and sweet and penetrating like "the sound of finely tapered bamboo playing in the wind." Her word play is excellent (*Cěnthini* 691: 79). The first song she sings is an abbreviated version of *Suluk Purwaduksina* (The Song of Purwaduksina).[38] The text comprises the teachings of the old saint Purwaduksina to his young wife. Anticipating his own death, his teachings concern the eight riddles that a woman must pose to any prospective husband. Only if he can successfully answer these riddles should she be willing to give herself to him.

The suluk is a song of riddles, each of which concerns the nature of the *maskawin* (that is, marriage gold, the token of material wealth that seals the marital union).[39] First: wherein or what is the maskawin (the material realization) of Allah and Muhammad, the maskawin of God and man? The answer: this is found in the coming together of God's light and your life. Second: then wherein is the maskawin of God's Throne and His Stool? This is realized when the divine emergence bridging the divide between inner and outer (*wahya kajatenipun*) comes together with your rasa.[40] A key term both in Javanese Sufi thought and in Javanese aesthetics, the polysemic "rasa," we have noted, signifies "feeling; taste; flavor; emotion; sense; meaning; thought; speech; voice; mystery and essence." The Javanese word "rasa," not entirely unlike the English word "sense," challenges the subject-object distinction. Its union in man with divine emergence from inner to outer seals the marriage of God's Throne and Stool. Third: And wherein is the maskawin of day and night? This is found in the coming together of insight (*arip*)[41] and the eye, and it yields the rasa of grace (*rasaning kanugrahan*). This rasa is not felt in the heart but instead dwells in

38 A much more extensive version of *Suluk Purwaduksina,* this one attributed to Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788–1820), is found in *Sĕrat Suluk: Jaman Karaton-dalĕm ing Surakarta*, compiled by Ng. Hawikrama, 1870 (MS. Sasana Pustaka 220 Na; Karaton Surakarta [KS] 481), 43–65. The word *purwaduksina* is a compound of *purwa* (east) and *duksina* (south) and indicates "the beginning and the end."

39 According to Theodoor Willem Juynboll (1930: 183), the Javanese *kawin* in maskawin is derived from the Persian *kāwīn* (dower). In Java, the maskawin, which was paid by the groom to his bride, was rarely worth more than a few guilders, and was often in the form of gold (*mas*). I am grateful to Edwin Wieringa for this reference.

40 In the Sumahatmaka and the Museum Radya Pustaka *Cěnthini* manuscript witnesses, it is *cahya kajaten* (light of divine manifestation) rather that *wahya kajaten* (divine emergence [bridging inner and outer]). So in these renditions the maskawin of the Throne and Stool is found in the coming together of the light of divine manifestation with your rasa (Sumahatmaka ca. 1931, 5; Ronggasutrasna, *et al.* (1815) late 19th century, 347).

41 I understand the Javanese *arip* here as a Javanization of the Arabic *ʿarīf* (insight, knowing), but *arip* also, and the same time, means sleepiness. We find shades of that meaning in the dreams of the following sentence.

dreams. Fourth: What of the maskawin of the stars and knowledge (*ngelmu*)? This comes in the wedding of vision and mind that moves in the depths of the beating heart of man. Fifth: The maskawin of woman and man? This is found in the union of spirit and body; its place is the marrow of your bones, and its form is eternal prayer (*salat da'im*). Sixth: The maskawin of the sun and the moon? (Alas, for this riddle the saint provides no answer to his young wife, possibly to preclude her chance of remarriage upon his death.)[42] Seventh: Wherein is the maskawin of the earth and the heavens? This comes with the wedding of generosity and love; it is realized in your brain and God's mystery (*sirollah*). And finally, wherein is the maskawin of heaven and hell? This is found in the coming together of desire (*nĕpsu*) and intellect (*budi*); its union is yourself (and also Himself, meaning God's self); the truth of good and evil is in knowing the comings together and the splittings apart (*Cĕnthini* 691: 80–86, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 9). To conclude, the old saint then oracularly interprets the poetic riddle to his young wife, in a verse that would be suspect of one or another heresy in a number of contemporary quarters:

Punika dipun-kaeksi	What you need to see is this,
sakeh maujud sadaya	that in all things manifest
[*ing ngriku gyan panunggale*][43]	there is an abode of oneness
ingkang bangsa ati puat	in the depths of the deepest heart
mungguh sira pangeran	within you is the Lord,[44]
nyata tinggal jiwa wujud	in truth, the spirit of being alone,[45]
maujuding dhawakira[46]	the realization of Himself.[47]

Cĕnthini 691: 87, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 10

42 Note that the answer to the sixth riddle is similarly missing in Pakubuwana IV's extended version of the *suluk* mentioned above in note 38.

43 This line, missing in the Kamajaya edition, is from Sumahatmaka's Mangkunagaran manuscript and the late 19th century Radya Pustaka witness (Sumahatmaka ca. 1931, 6; *Cĕnthini Wanantaka-Jurang Jangkung*, 347–48).

44 Or: "as for you and the Lord."

45 This is an ambiguous line. An equally plausible translation of the line is, "in fact, all that remains is soul/life (*jiwa*) and being (*wujud*)."

46 The last three lines of the stanza in the late 19th century Radya Pustaka manuscript are different from both the Kamajaya edition and the Sumahatmaka manuscript witness; they read: "amung sira pangeran/ nyata tunggal jiwa wujud/ maujuding ing ethekira" (there is but you and the Lord / truly of one spirit and being / realized in your vision) (Ronggasutrasna, *et al.* (1815) late 19th century, 348).

47 The final line could also, at the same time, be translated, "the Realization of the Self (God's Self, realized in yours)" or "comes to realization in you" or "becoming existent in yourself."

This short and abbreviated Sufi song composed in metaphors of marriage is one of striking emotional depth. Repeatedly situating the experience of divine union within the materiality of the human body, it is testament to the embodiment of spirit. The suluk is recited by a beautiful young woman in a virtuoso vocal performance. And it is performed in movement, in dance. Both her voice and her movements are delightful – at each point that the vocal melody comes to rest (*seleh*), she trips lightly around the circle as if flying, and when she stops, she appears, the *Cĕnthini* tells us, as if she is grooming and ornamenting herself – "just like a *gambyung* dancer" (*Cĕnthini* 691: 88, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 10). I will say a bit more about the gambyung (or *gambyong*) dance below.

As she performs she lets her suggestive glances fall on the noble guests, especially on Jayengraga who had already so inflamed her desire. The poet describes the reactions of each of the noblemen in turn to her advances: by some her desire is answered and by others it is rebuffed. The scene is highly sexually charged. Aside from the nobles who remain aloof, all the men present are maddened by her body and her voice – and, but for the fear of her husband, would take her for themselves (they see in her expression an easy sexual mark). The sensual desires of the women participants, too, are aroused. And it is first of all toward the most enticing of the noblemen (that is Jayengraga, or "the Master of Bodies") that these women's bodies intend. The village women press their bodies forward unashamedly seeking his attentions, his touch. The Master of Bodies regards the women with amusement, but, to their dismay, his body remains unmoved (691: 89–96).

Of course, we cannot know precisely what this dance that awakened such desire in this host of bodies would have looked like, but we can imagine. Pĕlangi's performance is called *dhulĕng*, possibly derived from *dhulang* (large circular wooden serving tray) and likely related to the *salawat dulang* performance of members of the Syattariyah Sufi "order" in West Sumatra. In this West Sumatran form, pairs of performers play large metal serving trays as if they were tĕrbang frame drums while singing Sufi lyrics in turn.[48] The dhulĕng form in the *Cĕnthini* is performed by dancers, either women or men, and is likened in this performance by Ni Pĕlangi to the female-style gambyong dance.

The gambyong dance is associated with professional dancers (*ronggeng* or *taledhek*), female or transvestite male-to-female; and the dance movements, in part, depict the actions of a nubile young girl adorning herself for her lover. According to *Sĕrat Sastramiruda*, a late nineteenth-century treatise on the

48 For a full description of *salawatan dulang* in contemporary West Sumatra, including transcribed lyrics, see Fathurahman 2008: 132–40. On the Syattariyah in nineteenth-century Central Java, see Florida 2019.

FIGURE 3.3
Gambyong dancer at the Mangkunagaran Palace, Solo, April 13, 2019, performing on the occasion of the 35-day birthday (*wĕton*) of Mangkunagara IX (r. 1988–2021)
PHOTO BY DONNY DANARDONO, WITH PERMISSION

performing arts, this dance form dates from the early Islamic period and was composed for the zikir of enraptured, ecstatic Sufi practitioners (*dul guyĕring birahi*). The accompaniment was composed of tĕrbangs and drums, and the singing dance was performed by the appointed male or female santris (pupils of the kyai).[49] The *Sastramiruda* also tells us that this form later evolved into the sensual and sexually permissive *tayuban* dance performed by professional dancers (ronggeng) considered to be of questionable morals ([Kusumadilaga and Kusumawardaya] 1981: 182). At the same time, the gambyong was also being cultivated into a high art form in Central Java, a status that it enjoys today. A little closer to the end of the *Cĕnthini*, in another night of suluk performance with many of the same cast members, Pĕlangi's dhulĕng is likened to the highly-refined courtly dance, the *srimpi* – or rather like that of a ronggeng gambyong performing a srimpi (*narimpi*).[50] Sometimes a kind of acrobatic fire

49 That there were female santri (students of Islamic knowledges) at that time is a little recognized fact; they do, however, surface not only in the *Sastramiruda*, but also repeatedly in the *Cĕnthini*, often mentioned together with the male santri (*santri jalu estri*).

50 "dennya dhulĕngi baut/kadya ronggeng gambyong narimpi" (*Cĕnthini* canto 694: 96, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 58). Or perhaps it should be translated, "like *the* ronggeng Gambyong performing the *srimpi*." Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum (2011 [1993]: 3) reports that

FIGURE 3.4 *Emprak, slawatan* performance by youths dancing to the singing of Islamic songs
DRAWING BY M.NG. JAGARADANA, FROM PIGEAUD 1938, FIG. 98, 356A

dance (*ngempraki*) was performed with the tĕrbangan. The players (*emprak*) would leap about performing acrobatic tricks while holding burning wicks in their mouths from which they blew streaming fire darts (see, for example, *Cĕnthini* 691: 144–49, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 16).[51] At times, emprak appears to have been a synonym for dhuleng.

Following the explosion of desire generated by Ni Pĕlangi's first performance, the young woman sings a second suluk – *Suluk Adat* (Song of Custom), whose text appropriately concerns the moderation and control of bodily desires (especially the desires for food and sleep) (*Cĕnthini* 691: 97–106). The sexually-charged atmosphere is further cooled when Amongraga orders the tĕrbangan to continue, but with the celibate Mangunarsa's reading of a sacred history of Islam in Arabic language and verse (691: 110–12).

during the reign of Pakubuwana IV (1788–1820) there was indeed a talented singer-dancer whose name was Nyai Lurah Gambyong. Just as the gambyong dance form could have been named for her (or, more likely, she for it), this poetic line might refer specifically to her.

51 For a fuller description of such fire dancing as depicted in the *Cĕnthini*, see Pigeaud 1938: 309–11.

6 The Noblemen Perform Slawatan in Arabic

The atmosphere soon heats up again, however, when the entire company joins in praise songs to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic followed by a series of virtuoso performances of Arabic songs (in solo, duet, and trio) by the accomplished and handsome young noblemen who sing in turns. When Anggungrimang (Always Longing) and his companion Piturun (The Descendant) perform, they do so beautifully while flirting with Jayengraga, thereby awakening in him his sexual desire for them.[52] In this homoerotic interlude, Jayengraga reminisces on the gay old days with his lovers, the boy ronggengs Sĕnu and Surat. Then it is Jayengraga's turn to sing, and the sound of his voice drives both the women and the men in the audience mad with desire. Finally, in a scene that is not entirely unlike the rowdy *Cĕnthini* crowd scenes discussed by Tony Day in this volume, this portion of this night of devotions and desires culminates in the coming to blows of two of the village women who had been competing for the attentions of the fabulous Jayengraga (691: 113–32). After this, the master Amongraga, who was, of course, alert to the many dramas transpiring around him, chides the assemblage in a sung evaluation of the various gifts God grants to man: the nobilities of heart, worldly wealth, ability, beauty, intellect, and voice. The problem is that those who are too absorbed in the delights and attractions of these worldly gifts turn their backs on God. It is only those who are able "to temper their passions and abstain from deviance," intending only to God, who are capable of finding their own perfection in the Lord. His words hit their marks, and "all who heard these words bowed their heads, humbled in their souls" (691: 134–43, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 15–16).

7 The Noblemen Perform Suluk

Sheikh Amongraga then bids the company to continue singing, but instead of Arabic texts, he requests they sing suluk in Javanese verse, accompanied by dhulĕng and emprak. As prelude to the suluk, all the assembled men and women chant the Muslim confession of faith in sĕkar gadhung song form,

52 The poet reminds us here that in their youth Anggungrimang (then called Mas Cĕbolang) and Piturun (then called Nurwitri) had formed a traveling tĕrbang troupe, and that they had been "stars" (*pilalan*) back in the day (*Cĕnthini* 691: 119–21). For more on Cĕbolang and Nurwitri as performers in their younger days, see Tony Day's contribution to this volume. Benedict Anderson (1990) also provides a spirited description and analysis of some of the homoerotic exploits of the youthful Anggungrimang and Piturun when they were at the height of their popularity as transvestite male-to-female boy ronggengs.

while Basariman, the rustic *pĕngulu* (Muslim religious official) of Mt. Merit, and Mangunarsa's santri, Monthel, perform the acrobatic emprak fire-dance (691: 144–49). This spectacle is followed by the sung and danced recitation of a series of suluk by the traveling noblemen. While the gentlemen's dance (dhuleng) is not described, the enchantment that their voices evoke is.

The suluk chosen by the men are more abstract and esoteric than the suluk sung by the women. Pĕlangi's first suluk had been couched in the metaphor of marriage, and her second was a moralistic and didactic work.[53] The suluk performed by the men are more metaphysical and evocative of spiritual perfection. Jayengraga is the first to sing; his song is *Suluk Koja-kasiyan* (Song of the Pitiful Foreign Merchant), a song that critiques bodily ascetic practices, noting that the varied ascetic and ritual practices of spiritual teachers (from mountain hermits, through literati, to ulama) are worthless unless the practitioner knows "the end of life and the way of love" (691: 151–54). The suluk closes:

Eling-eling den-aeling	Remember, remember; never forget
rungsiting Hyang Maha Mulya	the intricacy of Him All-Noble:
tan aneng kana myang kene	neither here nor there,
ĕnggone tanpa tu[d]uhan	in a place that is no place,
tan kajro tan kajaba	neither inside nor outside,
adoh tanpa wangĕnipun	infinitely distant,
aparĕk tanpa gĕpokan	coming close, but never touching.

Cĕnthini 691: 155, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 16–17

The spiritually advanced among the male audience apprehend the meaning of these words, and their hearts and minds are refined "like paddy rice pounded into flour" (691: 156). The village women, however, are unable to comprehend the powerful words; they are, instead, swept away in rapture by the beauty of Jayengraga's voice (691: 157–58).

53 In subsequent nights of devotion by many members of this company, the suluk are all performed by women, Ni Pĕlangi again along with the comically fat wife of a village kyai. The suluk that they sing are *Suluk Bathik*, a Sufi text couched in the metaphor of a girl preparing a batiked cloth (*Cĕnthini* 694: 70–88, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 54–57); *Suluk Tani*, a Sufi song couched in the metaphor of farming practices (*Cĕnthini* 694: 97–104, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 58–59); *Suluk Bĕthak*, Sufi teachings delivered through metaphors of cooking (*Cĕnthini* 701: 24–44, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 105–08); and, finally a suluk of unknown title that describes the four levels of Sufi practice through metaphors of everyday experience, while warning against being carried away by those same metaphors (*Cĕnthini* 702: 3–12, Kamajaya 1985–91, 12: 109–11).

Next to perform is Anggungrimang; he sings from the esoteric *Suluk Malangsumirang* (The Song of Malangsumirang [the eccentric]). This metaphysical song concerns, among other things, the true nature of body and soul, which the "eccentric" Malangsumirang couches in the metaphor of a *wayang* shadow puppet play.[54]

Kawangwanging siyang ratri	When considered by day and night,
raga tan ana [*a*]*nyana*[55]	none would guess that the body
lamun sukma sajatine	is in truth the soul –
angedheng dadya dhadhalang	revealing itself as the *dhalang* (puppeteer);
kawayang cipta rasa	the wayang puppets played are thought and feeling,
budi angĕn-angĕn iku	mind and imagination,
akĕlir jagad walikan	on the screen (*kĕlir*) of the topsy-turvy world.
Katon ring paesan jati	Seen in the mirror of Truth,
lĕlakone Kae Dhalang	the play of the dhalang –
prang lan banyol karĕsmine	battles and jokes, love scenes[56]
aneng sajroning wĕnginya	in the depths of the night
nyateng wahya jatmika	manifest the opening of virtue,
ngaurip kalakonipun	the life that's played, that happens,
yĕkti nang jroning yuswanta	truly within the depths of your life.[57]

Cĕnthini 691: 165–66, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 18

As in the preceding performance, the hearts of the adepts are purified, while the women are thrilled and overwhelmed by the beauty of Anggungrimang's voice. Forgetting Jayengraga, Anggungrimang alone becomes the object of their passion (691: 167–69).

He is followed by Amongraga and Tambangraras's student, Ragasmara, who sings *Suluk Purbajati* (Song of the Origin, or Author, of Truth), a highly abstract Sufi meditation on ecstasy that closes with an erotic metaphor:

54 It is worth noting that in his recitation of the suluk here, Anggungrimang "censors" the self-consciously antinomian portions of the text.

55 The line is short one syllable: better *anyana* or *nyana-a*.

56 Alternative translation: "battles and jokes, beauty." In classical Javanese the word *rĕsmi* can be glossed either "beauty" or "love making, the erotic." Thanks to Ben Arps for pointing out to me that the rĕsmi (the erotic), jokes, and battles form three essential components of wayang performance.

57 An alternative (and, I think, equally plausible) translation of the last two lines: "that brings the play to life – / truly unto the depths of your life."

Panglenging Hyang Purbajati	The vision of the True Creator
muksa nir tan katingalan	vanishes in perfection, it is not seen;
karĕm kandhĕg pandhulune	in ecstasy, vision ceases.
paran margane panggiha	How then might the way be found?
ngulati (ng)graning arga	Look to the mountain peak:
Sukma nĕdheng dhirinipun	the Spirit consumes itself/yourself
aliwung ing wuyungira	in rapture, mad, ecstatic.
Kadyangganing sĕkar kentir	Like a flower set afloat,
nir anggananing kusuma	the flower itself disappears
dening kaijaban wimboh	while by miracle it grows.
rĕke adoh yen dinohna	For 'tis far, if it's made distant
parĕk pinarĕkĕna	and near when it's approached;
tĕtĕmu nora kĕpangguh	meeting though never met,
sirna tansah kawistara	rendered nothing yet forever seen.
Wus awor datan anunggil	Joined together, but not become one;
kapisah tan kĕna bĕnggang	separate, with never a space between.
kahana tan na nyatane	Being that's not being, in truth.
pralambang sandi pralena	The meaning of death's secret/secret death
lir tibaning asmara	is like falling in love:
campuh ika iki iku	the coming together of this and that and that –
sampurnane sawatgata	perfection all at once.

Cĕnthini 691: 172–74, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 19

Not surprisingly, all present are transported by this song: their reason is shaken. While the effects of this escape from reason upon the adepts is not described, the poet lingers upon the reactions of the village women – especially those of the young widows and old maids, all of whom are wet with desire from the sound of Ragasmara's shimmering voice (which sounds like a *gambang gongsa*).[58] Now both Jayengraga and Anggungrimang are forgotten – Ragasmara alone is now the object of their love (691: 175–77).

The last of the noblemen to perform suluk is Anggungrimang's companion, Piturun. He sings the highly abstract, metaphysical *Suluk Jatipralena* (Song of the True Death). The suluk opens:

58 The gambang gongsa is an archaic metallophone of 16–19 bronze keys. With its sparkling, shimmering sound, it is played in the Karaton Surakarta for the piece *gĕndhing Undur-undur Kajongan*, which is struck the moment the ruler rises from his throne to retire from audience.

Suluk kang kinarya singir	This suluk rendered in song
pan Suluk Jati Pralena	is *Suluk Jati Pralena*.
carmining roh tokit rĕke	The mirror of the soul is *tauhid* (God's unity),
wĕwayangan rupa tunggal	the reflection of a single form,
tan kĕna palih kayan [= *kayun*]	life that cannot be split in two:
kayun wisesa puniku	this the All-mighty life is
Maha Sukcining Hyang Suksma	the supreme Purity of immaterial God.

Cĕnthini 691: 180, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 19

The suluk continues with a consideration of the three forms of the Muslim Confession (*sahadat*): *mutanakirah* (the last), *mutawasitah* (the midmost), and *muta-awilah* (the first). The song turns on an analysis of these three forms as stages, ascending in rank from the last to the first, on man's path to perfection in God. Mutanakirah (the last) is the confession of the faithful that dwells in their hearts. Filling those hearts are the mutawasitah (the midmost) and the muta-awilah (the first). The mutawasitah confession (the midmost) is the witness without associates (*la sarika*) that is performed by the angels who are nigh unto God. Finally, the muta-awilah confession (the first) is God's witnessing of Himself, the worship that is granted to the Perfect Man, the Prophet Muhammad (691: 181–89). The suluk closes with a depiction of the ultimate Confession, the muta-awilah, as the final realization of man's perfection, body and soul, declaring that with this realization:

Dadya tan ana nganani	Nothing is brought into being,
ton-tinon tunggal dhirinya	seeing-and-being-seen in the Oneness of Self.
Maha Sukci ing jĕnĕnge	All-Pure is its name:
tasbehing Hyang kang Wisesa	the praises (*tasbeh*) of the All-Mighty
anĕsbeh ing sagala	singing praises to all that is,
ngesthi jiwa dhawakipun	fixed upon his/His own spirit alone,
lĕstari jiwangganira	both body and soul abiding,
Kadya muksa tan aningit	Like vanishing into perfection without disappearing,
anglaut tanpa banyunya	going to sea in a sea without water;
sampurna napi isbate	the perfection of the negation and the affirmation,[59]
purna langgĕng jĕnĕngira	perfect, eternal, it is called
tan nir kidam bakanya	not extinction but abiding in eternity.

59 This would be the two parts of the Confession: the *napi* (negation), "There is no god" and the *isbat* (affirmation), "but God."

wus tam dennya singir suluk	Finished was the singing of the suluk
Ki Tokit Jatipralena	*Ki Tokit Jatipralena.* (The *Tauhid* of True Death)

Cĕnthini 691: 190–91, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 20–21

Thus ended the kĕntrungan. As before, the women were overcome by love, but now their love was not directed at any one of nobles; instead, their ardor was both fractured and diffused in a proliferation of passion without defined destination.

8 A Conclusion

The night of sung and danced suluk performance depicted in this *Cĕnthini* passage progresses through oscillations between desire and the control (not suppression) of desire, culminating in this final supra-corporeal proliferation of passion, a kind of rapture. The oscillation is punctuated by the poets' (sometimes in the voice of Amongraga) dispositions on the nature of this form of suluk practice. He/they speak on voice, body, mind, desire, and the mind's redirection of erotic desire into a more perfect embodied desire for God. He (or they) also speak on the phenomenology of this form of suluk performance – how, depending upon the level of his or her self-perfection, each of the participants in such ecstatic nights of remembrance realizes a range of experience: from the lowly lust aroused in some of the simple village women, through the aesthetic appreciation of performance art by the more sophisticated audience, and the clear apprehension of the poetry's metaphysical subtleties by the more advanced travelers on the path, to the divine rapture (body and soul) that is enjoyed by those who, like the wholly perfected Amongraga, have already attained the state of *makripat* (Ar. *ma'rifa*), or true knowledge.

Finally, at the close of the night, just before he is to lead the dawn prayers and then vanish back into Mystery, Amongraga pronounces his assessment of their night of devotion. This intoxicated performance of suluk, he says, is the most fitting form to effect the perfected knowledge that is makripat in the hearts of the Javanese faithful, the *mukmin* of Java:

Seh Mongraga ngandika ris,	Sheikh Amongraga spoke softly,
Yayi Kae Malangkarsa	"Brother Ki Malangkarsa,
mungguh mukmin Jawa kiye	as for the faithful of Java,
tanggaping pangĕrtining tyas	to gain understanding in their hearts
dhangan sacaranira	the best of possible ways is

priyangga rasaning suluk	through the experience (rasa) of suluk alone[60]
andungkap panggayuhi[r]a	is reached the end to which we aim.
Prabeda pasahing kalbi	"Different, the effect upon the heart
ingkang saking kitab Kur'an	that comes from the Holy Qur'an –
kĕdah kathah rubedane	demanding strenuous struggle,
andangu suruping driya	long it takes to enter the heart,
tan tĕkeng rasa sabda	never reaching the rasa of the Word;
kĕdah neng lambang kiki[d]ung	for that requires the symbols of song
lĕlagon tĕmbang macapat	sung in Javanese macapat verse."

Cĕnthini 691: 195–96, KAMAJAYA 1985–91, 12: 20–21

Sheikh Amongraga, not entirely unlike Gus Mus, recognizes that in artistic performance, in music and dance – or in painting, performed or received as an act of devotion to God (zikir), there is something of the divine that can draw the practitioner, depending upon the development of his or her rasa, further along the path to perfection. For the faithful of Java, he says, it is in the artistic performance and reception of suluk that they can better, or more quickly, come to *experience* the truth of God's Word (*sabda*) revealed in the Holy Qur'an, than they can from the *book* of the Qur'an itself. And with that note, the assembly breakfasts before making for the mosque to purify themselves for their dawn prayers. Amongraga leads the prayers, reciting two Qur'anic *suras*[61] to the collected worshippers in his fragrant, lovely voice, before stepping out of the mosque and vanishing into Mystery with his wife and their disciple.

Appendix: Cast of Characters

Amongraga (He Who Nurtures the Body), formerly known as **Jayengrĕsmi** (Master of Love or Beauty). Main protagonist of the *Cĕnthini*. Son of Sunan Giri by a secondary wife; older brother of Mangunarsa and Rancangkapti; husband of Tambangraras.

Anggungrimang (Always Longing), formerly known as Mas **Cĕbolang** (He Who Steals Away). Son of the Kyai of Sokayasa (Support of Creation); husband of Rancangkapti.

Basariman. *Pĕngulu* of Gunung Pala (Mt. Merit).

Cĕnthini. Maidservant of Tambangraras; wife of Ki Monthel.

60 Alternatively translated, "through the meaning, the Mystery of suluk alone."

61 The suras were *al-Sajdah* (Prostration), the 32nd sura, and *al-Kawthar* (Abundant Good), the 108th.

Jayengraga (Master of the Body/of Bodies). Son of Kyai Panurta, leader of the pĕsantren of Wanamarta (Forest of Coolness); younger brother of Tambangraras and Jayengrĕsmi; husband of Rarasati (Delight of the Heart).

Jayengrĕsmi (Master of Love or Beauty), formerly known as **Jayengwesthi** (Master of Danger). Son of Kyai Panurta, leader of the pĕsantren of Wanamarta (Forest of Coolness); younger brother of Tambangraras; older brother of Jayengraga; husband of Turida (In Love).

Malangkarsa (Impeding the Will). Kyai of the pĕsantren on Gunung Pala (Mt. Merit).

Mangunarsa (Awakening Desire), formerly known as **Jayengsari** (Master of Beauty, of Essences). Son of Sunan Giri by a secondary wife; younger brother of Amongraga; older brother of Rancangkapti. Kyai of the hermitage of Wanantaka (Forest of Death); he is celibate.

Modang. Ulama and dhalang kĕntrung in the vicinity of Mt. Merit; husband of Pĕlangi.

Monthel, formerly known as **Buras** (name of a skin disease). Servant of Mangunarsa and Rancangkapti; husband of Cĕnthini.

Pĕlangi (Rainbow). Female performer of suluk from the vicinity of Mt. Merit; wife of Modang.

Piturun (Descendant), formerly known as **Nurwitri** (Northwest and/or Light of the Night Prayer). Companion of Anggungrimang.

Ragasmara (Body of Love). Disciple of Tambangraras and Amongraga.

Rancangkapti (Shaping the Will). Daughter of Sunan Giri by a secondary wife; youngest sibling of Amongraga; wife of Anggungrimang.

Tambangraras (Bringing [hearts] together in Bliss *and*/*or* Forsaking Pleasure), also known as **Selabrangti** (Diamond of Love). Daughter and eldest child of Kyai Panurta, leader of the pĕsantren of Wanamarta (Forest of Coolness); elder sibling of Jayengrĕsmi and Jayengraga; wife of Amongraga.

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CHAPTER 4

The Hamza Affect: Feeling as a Moving Force in the Asian-Islamic Epic

Bernard Arps

Abstract

As a contribution to the study of emotions and ambience in Javanese literature, drama, and culture more generally, I argue that there is a Hamza affect, or more precisely a complex *affect-in-action paradigm*, which is intrinsic to how plots in the epic of Amir Hamza are built. In the sixteenth-century Java Sea world, where this paradigm was established, it stood out, as other narrative works featured rather different relations between feeling and action. This paradigm became typical of Javanese Hamza storytelling. It found its way into puppetry with other narrative repertoires as well, and helped to promote an action-oriented sensibility in society.

Keywords

epic of Amir Hamza – history of emotions – narrativity – Javanese literature and puppetry

1 Epic, Affect, and Amir Hamza

A key feature of epic storytelling across South and Southeast Asia is the prominence of affect. A *felt* quality inheres both in the narration of epic tales and in the storyworlds that the narration brings into being. Emotions, sentiments, moods, dispositions, characters, atmospheres, and sensations are brought to the surface and thematized time and again (Arps 2023).

While affectfulness characterizes South/Southeast Asian epics across the board, its forms and functions are not identical from one story or rendition to another. Told in many genres and languages across a region stretching from Istanbul to Xinjiang and Makassar, until the early 1900s the adventures of the Arab hero Amir Hamza (an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad) and his kin constituted the principal epic of Islam in Asia. In parts of Java, they continue to

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feature in puppetry and dance. Hamza narratives, too, are suffused with feeling, attributed to *dramatis personae* as individuals (temperaments) or on particular occasions (states of mind), and to scenes (atmospheres). Now the realm of feeling remains almost entirely unexplored in studies of Javanese literature and drama. Also, after initial surveys of Hamza texts by Van Ronkel (1895) and Poerbatjaraka (1940), little has been done to broaden our general understanding of this epic storyworld that used to be familiar and hugely popular around the Java Sea. And too often the study of narrative restricts itself to either text or performance, disregarding moreover real-life narrativity, an artificial division of labor inherited from a textualist western scholarly tradition. Trying to break through these tendencies, I will argue in this chapter that there is a Hamza affect, which is intrinsic to how the epic's plots are built. Complex and historically variable though it is, this realm of feelings-in-action is typical of Hamza storytelling irrespective of genre. It resonated in society.

To identify the Hamza affect I consider four renditions of an episode, all from Java. The last three are puppetry performances held in 1985, 2019, and 2020. The first is literary and at least four centuries older: the poem *Stories of Amir* (*Caritanira Amir*), which once circulated in the Java Sea world (Arps 2021).

1.1 *Getting Amzyah to Rescue His Father-in-Law*

This poem is cast in *těmbang macapat* verse forms, structured for melodic reading (Arps 1992). It recounts a string of adventures in the adult life of Amzyah (as Hamza is called in this text). His and his family's wellbeing is forever under threat from his own father-in-law, the Persian emperor Nursiwan, who resides in Madayin (Ctesiphon). As a first indication of how affect operates in *Stories of Amir*, here is a summary of the intricate beginning of the illustrative episode, noting its rapid-fire succession of feelings, dispositions, and emotive behaviour:

> When Nursiwan's son Herman learns that his father has fallen into the hands of Sadad Kabul Umar, the king of Abyssinia (*Abĕsi*), and is subjected to endless torments, Herman is heartbroken and wants Nursiwan to be freed. Herman consults his father's wise counsellor, who says that only Amzyah can accomplish this. But Amzyah, who resides several days' travel away with his wife Munigarin – the emperor's daughter – is not favorably disposed towards Herman, nor towards the opportunistic and unbelieving emperor himself. Herman thinks that a request for help will just make Amzyah angrier with them than he already is. So the counsellor suggests that Herman appeal to the compassion that the empress,

> Munigarin's mother, feels for Nursiwan. Herman should ask the empress to write Amzyah a letter begging him to pity the emperor. This letter will no doubt be seen also by Munigarin, who is likely to burst into tears, for she loves her father dearly. In this way Amzyah will be moved by love for his wife to travel to Abyssinia.
>
> Herman does as suggested. The empress obliges with a flattering letter, invoking Amzyah's "compassion for the miserable" and the fact that he is "feared by the entire world." She beseeches Amzyah to pity the unfortunate emperor, stressing Amzyah's bravery in the face of danger.
>
> The letter is hand-carried to Amzyah. Reading it, Amzyah realizes that Herman is behind it. He decides nonetheless to obey his mother-in-law's wish. With a smile Amzyah orders his companion Umarmaya to show the letter to Munigarin inside the palace. Amzyah tells the envoy to convey to the empress that he will oblige although Herman has done him harm.
>
> When Umarmaya presents the letter to Munigarin, she recognizes her mother's handwriting. Deeply distraught she weeps, imagining Nursiwan's suffering. Umarmaya returns to describe Munigarin's reaction. Amzyah is touched and his resolve to free the emperor becomes even stronger. Amzyah tells Umarmaya to travel with him to Abyssinia. Umarmaya, however, advises against the undertaking. He predicts that the emperor will continue to wish Amzyah ill and warns that it will lead him into sorrow and misery, danger, self-blame, and disappointment. Amzyah falls silent, then vents extreme irritation with what, apparently, he considers self-conceit on Umarmaya's part. Amzyah persists. He takes leave of the Arab nobles who are his followers and departs. (*Stories of Amir*, VII.58–VIII.22)

In the final analysis Hamza's journey is his own decision, but this decision is enveloped in multiple layers of other people's agency,[1] all grounded in emotions. The journey is instigated by Herman, in turn encouraged by the senior counsellor. At Herman's bidding it is requested by Hamza's mother-in-law. It is further motivated by Munigarin (by Herman's machinations, again following the counsellor's advice). And it is countermotivated by Umarmaya. By the will of God, the journey will end in calamity for Amzyah. With the sole exception of the counsellor's involvement, in every case the motive is strong affect:

1 This accords with another feature of South/Southeast Asian epic (alongside the prominence of affect): the exploits of the main protagonists tend to be not of their own design but willed by others (Arps 2023).

pity and love for the emperor, love for a spouse, worries about a companion's wellbeing, God's own displeasure.

Sketched in broader strokes and without noting all instances of affect, this is how the episode continues.

> Amzyah reaches Nursiwan and carries him off in his cage. Recently, however, Amzyah has been presumptuous, failing to acknowledge the will of God. Before he can free Nursiwan, by God's disposition Amzyah loses his way, gets trapped in a desert called the Sea of Dissolution, and nearly dies.
>
> Sadad Kabul Umar finds Nursiwan; they are reconciled.
>
> Having failed to trace Amzyah, Sadad concludes that he is dead. Sadad and Nursiwan rejoice and march on Kaus, the city where Amzyah resides. Sadad has long coveted Munigarin and sees his way clear to win her.
>
> Meanwhile Amzyah, languishing in the Sea of Dissolution, invokes the name of God. (This will boost his luck.)
>
> Alerted to Amzyah's misfortune by a dream, Umarmaya goes looking for him. He finds him, helps him to recover, and describes the situation in Kaus.
>
> In a short intervening storyline, Sadad's son, on the throne of Abyssinia in his father's absence, attacks Amzyah, is subjected by him, and converted to Islam. Amzyah leaves for Kaus.
>
> Meanwhile Sadad, joined by King Jobin (another of Amzyah's vassals, who hereby defects) and Herman, besieges Kaus. They do battle with Amzyah's followers.
>
> A magically powerful Abyssinian presents himself to the invaders, offering to infiltrate the city. He sneaks into the palace and murders Kobat Sariyan (Amzyah and Munigarin's son). A tumult breaks out, everyone mourns the nobleman. Munigarin appears to have lost her sanity.
>
> In the enemy's camp Nursiwan feels regrets but Sadad has the battle re-commence. Amzyah and Umarmaya arrive. Sadad flees but is killed. At the same time, in boundless sorrow, Munigarin seeks death on the battlefield. Jobin thinks she has come to offer herself, but she shoots him with an arrow. He thrusts his sword into her back. Amzyah arrives and kills Jobin, but Munigarin cannot be saved.
>
> Amzyah is devastated by the deaths of his wife and son. Laments fill the air. Munigarin's body is taken to Amzyah's home city Mecca for burial. After 21 days of mental breakdown, Amzyah is visited in a dream by the prophet Abraham, who reprimands him for loving his wife more than God and reminds him to be steadfast. Amzyah begins to interact with

> others again, but not for long. He mourns at Munigarin's grave day and night and sends away all his companions. The entire universe shows pity for Amzyah. He even chases away Umarmaya, asserting that he will not change his mind about this. But as Amzyah fails to invoke the will of God, he calls down His anger. (*Stories of Amir*, VIII.22–IX.67)

This heralds the next adventure.

1.2 *Tracing Affect in the Narrative*

The episode is built from Amzyah's going to Abyssinia, his straying, and further movements occasioned by these journeys. As the summaries show, it is affect that inspires protagonists to go or be dispatched somewhere, thus launching the respective storylines – trains of events centered on a protagonist – that, woven together, form this episode. But how does affect relate to plot in other episodes of *Stories of Amir*, and how is affect actually *narrated*? These questions are addressed in the next section. I will show that affect is instrumental not only in starting storylines, but also in how they proceed and end. Meanwhile, the text promotes a meta-affective stance as well: steadiness of heart, and God's affects play a constitutive role in steering the plot.

In the third section I consider other sixteenth-century narratives in Javanese, and the Malay antecedents of *Stories of Amir*, to form an idea of whether *Stories of Amir*'s affect-in-action paradigm was typical. After discussing the feelings-plot nexus in later literary tellings of the Hamza epic, I turn to recent performances of puppetry. Differences in some respects and striking similarities in other respects suggest how the Hamza affect has fared historically.

2 Feeling and Plot in *Stories of Amir*

Stories of Amir is contained in a palm-leaf manuscript, MS Jav. b. 2 (R), donated to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 1629 (Arps 2021). The provenance of manuscript and text is unrecorded, as is its authorship. But there are signs that the poem was composed in Banten, on the north coast of western Java, in the sixteenth century. Versions of this particular telling of the Hamza epic have been identified in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts from Madura and Lombok. Possibly they occur in manuscripts from Palembang from the same period as well (Arps 2021). In these places around the Java Sea everyday spoken interaction was in other languages, but certain works of literature in Javanese enjoyed esteem, as did other kinds of cultural *javanaiserie* (Arps 2018).

Comparison (as yet unpublished) reveals that *Stories of Amir* was based on a Malay exemplar, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (Samad Ahmad 1987). This prose narrative in turn was adapted from a Persian text likewise in prose (Van Ronkel 1895), probably written in Iran in the eleventh century (Pritchett 1991: 2). These adaptations were faithful to their respective exemplars' *dramatis personae* and plot. Yet the outcome, *Stories of Amir*, is distinctly Javanese in terms of language, style, and partly also storyworld (Arps 2021: 652–53). This raises the question how much of the affect and its plot-driving power in *Stories of Amir* was Malay, Persian, Madurese, and so on, as well as Javanese. There is a tendency in Javanese studies (and area studies generally, as well as anthropology) to seek out local cultural uniqueness. But like the *Anbiya* texts examined by Ronit Ricci in the present volume, the Hamza epic helped to establish and uphold cultural features and patterns across a much broader region than Java and other islands around the Java Sea.

2.1 *The Narration of Affect*

Unquestionably the category comprising emotion, temperament, ambience, and so on has great cultural significance, but it is not easy to do it rigorous analytical justice. Small wonder that in Javanese literature and performance it has hardly been studied.[2] But while the content of individual categories of affect is difficult to define, the means of representing them in storytelling are clear. In *Stories of Amir* affect is narrated in four main ways. Before reviewing them, however, I should mention that (like in all *tembang* texts treated in this volume) the melodic nature of the text's reading produced an affective dimension as well, one that was continually present during the reading and hearing of the story, but that changed in character with the verse form (Arps 1992). Unfortunately, no melodies from before the late nineteenth century are recorded for the verse forms of *Stories of Amir*. Their affective features in earlier times are unknown.[3]

The most elementary way of narrating affect attributes individual or shared emotions and dispositions to *dramatis personae* verbally. Examples

2 Beside Day's contribution on minor characters and their depiction and Wieringa's on autobiographical musings (both in the present volume), an important exception is Benamou's study of vocal music (2010). It has been suggested that Javanese, Balinese, Sasak, and Malay puppetry promotes a particular sensibility of space and place, a spatial affect (Arps 2016). Beatty 2019 is an inspiring anthropological study of emotion among others in Java. Beatty formulates the key theoretical insight that emotion has narrativity. He relates emotions to places (through their inhabitants), ethnic groups, and religions. He does not consider emotion in Javanese or translingual and transcultural narrative.

3 A musical layer is integral also to dramatic performances. This will be mentioned below.

are "Umarmaya was delighted" (*suka twasirÔmarmaya*),[4] "feeling troubled in his heart" (*ewĕh rasaning nala*), "there were numerous onlookers / who were astonished" (*akweh punang aniningal / kagawokan*). The affect may be represented metaphorically rather than explicitly named: "it was as if Amir's / heart was rent out as he heard this" (*sira Amir / lwir sinĕndhal twasnyângrungu*), "their hearts were sprinkled with water of life" (*twase kabeh ingamrĕtan*).

These personal or communal emotions and suchlike shade into more complex feelings which in English one might call realizations. The narrative nature of these affects is expressed by phrasing them as a tiny tale, such as "he sensed in his heart / that he had run into dangerous difficulty" (*rumasêng twasipun / yan sira amanggih wisthi*). A shared emotion is stated punchily in a single word ("startled," *kaget*) but quickly elaborated by means of such a micro-narrative in "The people of Ctesiphon were startled for they really did not know / that the king of Abyssinia had come / They had not worried there might be trouble / as treachery was not on their minds" (*Kaget wong Madayin apan tuhu tan wruh / yan dhatĕng raja Abĕsi / datan anangsayêng kewuh / dening tan amanah juti*). This example shows how affect may be narrated in layers: the absence of perfidiousness is stacked upon worry, in turn stacked upon startle. Authors did not hesitate to assign feeling in complex sequences and configurations; witness Umarmaya's warning to Amzyah, mentioned near the end of the earlier summary:

> For if you choose not to heed my advice / to you, by your leave / if against better judgement you insist / and travel to Sadad Umar / by your leave, you are certain to / encounter sorrow / on this undertaking of yours // And you will encounter misery once you reach your destination / Great danger is what you will find / You will lay the blame on yourself / feel extreme disappointment / It is better to follow my advice /
>
> (*Apan yan tan kedhĕpa atur manira / ing pakanira singgih / yan amaksakĕna / maraêng Sadad Umar / yakti pakanira singgih / amanggih duhka / ing lampahira iki // Amanggih malarat sira tĕkêng paran / wisthi agung kapanggih / anĕsĕl sarira / liwat analahasa / yogya tutĕn atur mami* / (*Stories of Amir*, VIII.15–16))

4 *TwasirÔmarmaya* is a contraction of *twasira Umarmaya* "the heart of Umarmaya." In *Stories of Amir* this kind of vowel sandhi (fusion of vowels across a word boundary) occurs regularly for metrical reasons. In the transliteration it is signalled with a circumflex accent to facilitate comprehension.

Thirdly, affect may be unnamed but evident from action. To mention one case, when Umarmaya has rescued Amzyah from the Sea of Dissolution he reports that an infidel king is marching on Kaus to capture Munigarin. Amzyah's response is charged with emotion: "Then the nobleman / was silent, he did not say a word" (*yata Wong Menak / měněng sira tanpângling*).

The last major way of narrating affect concerns not so much emotion as the atmospheric sensibility of a situation, event, or place. Most if not all narrative elements and categories have an affective dimension, rather than being either affective or not, but at key junctures an ambience is explicitly thematized. The narrative in the Bodleian manuscript begins *in medias res* with the appointment of Kobat Sariyan, Amzyah and Munigarin's son, as ruler in Kaus. A few stanzas later a sense of general wellbeing concludes the episode in question (which presumably was recounted in an earlier volume of the text):

> Now he reigned as king for a considerable time / Kobat Sariyan was content / The city-state of Kaus flourished / as did the border regions / All were the same, none stood out //
>
> (*Alawas mangke panjěněngira prabhu / Kobat Sariyan wus trěpti / krěta nagara ing Kaus / muwah ingkang těpi siring / apapak tan anâmojok //* (*Stories of Amir*, 1.17))

The next episode begins:

> Let it be told then that evil deeds were afoot / There was malevolence in the city / So let us speak of Chancellor Baktak / who did not cease to commit falsehood / for he sought to lead into wickedness //
>
> (*Wantěn ta ucapěn duskrětaning laku / wontěn dusthaning nagari / dan Patih Baktak winuwus / tan mantun akarya juti / sabab amrih duduning wong //* (*Stories of Amir*, 1.18))

An air of evil is created by description, building on the knowledge that Nursiwan's chancellor is unreliable, immoral, and malevolent all through the epic. Here he exudes evil in Kaus. In the next stanza, Baktak will observe that currently there is no war. No-one stands in Amzyah's way. Baktak proceeds to stir up a conflict.

An ambient sensibility may also be summoned through poetic style. There are at least three distinct evocative styles in *Stories of Amir* (Arps 2021: 664). One represents a sense of entrancement (mostly rapture) occasioned by

the sights, sounds, and scents of a place or situation, usually as protagonists travel through nature or arrive in a beautiful garden. The affect, expressed iconically through poetic formulations rich in alliteration and Old Javanese words, is sensed by them but ascribed to the setting or circumstances.[5] The other two styles are a register evoking chaos, often in battles, employing markedly onomatopoetic words with a humorous undertone, and a style that by means of frequent enjambments signifies dynamism and urgency during combat and other physical movement.

2.2 *A Manager of Affect: Umarmaya*

As demonstrated by the complex emotion-laden contrivance that opens the illustrative episode and by Umarmaya's plea to Amzyah not to go to Abyssinia, feelings may be managed by others. The paramount manager of affect is Umarmaya, Amzyah's companion since childhood.

Stories of Amir tells us little about what Umarmaya looks like. The sole indication of his appearance is the appellation *Si Pothet* "little rascal," which Amzyah uses affectionately and in jest. Umarmaya and Amzyah are often mentioned in a single breath. At one point, Umarmaya describes their relationship in metaphorical terms: they are like pollen and flower petals, or soul and body (*Stories of Amir*, IX.64). Amzyah is probably the pollen and soul, Umarmaya the petals and body that encase them.[6]

Umarmaya is deeply and recurrently involved in affect. Amzyah considers him his beloved (*kakasih*). In the course of the narrative Umarmaya himself experiences joy, anxiety, sorrow, desperation, elation, contentedness, the gamut of feelings. But more important is his effect on others. He acts as emissary, especially Amzyah's, and in this capacity triggers emotions: "Upon the arrival of Umarmaya / Munigarin's heart seemed sprinkled with

5 In employing this style, *Stories of Amir* references a poetics that is central to Old Javanese literature (Zoetmulder 1973: 172–73, Robson 1983: 311–12). I will briefly come back to this.

6 As shown by his popular epithet ʿAmar or ʿUmar ʿAyyār, in the Persian renditions he is a *ʿayyār*, a trickster and spy. The same goes for the Urdu version (available in English translation: Pritchett 1991, Lakhnavi and Bilgrami 2007). Although in the Malay and Javanese renditions this designation is absent, Umarmaya (Umar Umaiyah in Malay) does continue to exhibit conduct associated with it. Pigeaud placed the Umarmaya of Javanese puppetry in the category of "astute deformed clowns" (1950: 237–38). On Pigeaud's authority, Bausani (1974: 460) proposed a theory of structural equivalence and historical connection between the *ʿayyār* and these divine clown-servants of Javanese and Balinese mythology. In the Hamza shadowplay of Lombok and Bali, Umarmaya indeed has the iconography of such a character. But as amusing, dutiful, and supernaturally gifted as Umarmaya may be, no literary or performative storytelling genre known to me from Java casts him as a divine clown-servant.

life-giving water / She felt as if raised from the dead / So, too, did the knights" (*SapraptanirÔmarmaya / lwir minrětan twasira Munigarin / lwir pějah amarabangun / muwah para satriya*). He is a renowned fighter, inspiring confidence in some and terror in others. A warrior who murdered Umarmaya's father is warned: "Not a single king dares to stand up / to Umarmaya, in any circumstance / It appears that you desire to die / that you have had enough of life" (*Norâna ratu wania / sapisan-pisan ing Umarmayêki / baya sira arĕp antu / bosĕn sira agĕsang*). Umarmaya likes to play the fool as well, as when he is reunited with Amzyah after a lengthy separation:

> He danced about, looking up to the sky, pouting / squealing and shrieking with laughter / All the onlookers were amused / by Umarmaya's little act / The palace servants were greatly delighted //
>
> (*Angigĕl tumĕnga ing tawang mucucu / gumuyu abĕlik-bĕlik / suka sakwehing andulu / polahirÔmarmayêki / nti sukaning kang papandho //* (*Stories of Amir*, XI.39))

And, key in the present context, Umarmaya stewards the feelings of Amzyah. Time and again he attempts to shield him from sorrow.

2.3 *Affect as Source of Story*

Not only does our illustrative episode as a whole start with affect, so do its individual storylines. When Sadad Kabul Umar, king of Abyssinia, goes to search for his prisoner Nursiwan who has vanished, he is motivated by a series of feelings. Waking up to find Nursiwan gone along with his cage, "He felt alarmed, he thought to himself in bewilderment / 'Hey, who could it possibly have been / that had the audacity to take him?'" (*Gadgada manahira umangĕ sira / heh sapa baya iki / kang wani ameta*). He finds a note from Amzyah, "And thereupon King Sadad's heart began to pound / He was visibly afraid" (*Yata gumĕtĕr twasira Raja Sadad / sira asĕmu wĕdi*). He convenes his warriors, reports what has happened, and considers that "'It will be best if at this point I acknowledge / the wickedness of my deeds in the past'" (*Aběcik iki ingsun aprasadua / ing duduningsun uni*). This gets the action going: they leave, soon to find the cage containing Nursiwan. Later in the episode, the brief interposed story about Sadad's son is another example of affect setting in motion a train of actions. Once this prince (who remains nameless) has been summarily introduced into the narrative, in the space of three stanzas it is told that he feels alarmed (*gadgada*) when he learns that Amzyah has resurfaced, orders the battle-drums to be struck, and marches on Amzyah.

The same applies to the other storylines and major episodes in *Stories of Amir*. We have seen, for instance, how a mood of evil centered on Baktak in Kaus opens the text's first new episode. A different pattern, mentioned in the summary with regard to Umarmaya, occurs so often that it merits illustration. God (implicitly and behind the scenes) sends a dream – often ominous – to a protagonist, the dream sparks their affect, the affect motivates them to go somewhere or dispatch an emissary, the journey makes a new storyline. One night Amzyah has a dream.

> It was Prince Umar Yunani[7] whom he got to see / in the dream that came to him / swimming through a surface of water / the surface of an ocean of blood / Soon the sea washed him away // Thereupon he startled, the nobleman awoke / Immediately he sat upright / and at once began to feel bewildered / becoming exceedingly apprehensive / as he turned it over in his heart // Soon he had conveyed the news to Umarmaya / about the dream that he had had / Umarmaya said with respect / "It would be best if your servant[8] / went after him,[9] ahead of others // [...]" / Amir then said "Umarmaya, do make haste / you must depart immediately." / Soon Umarmaya had asked his leave / and then he departed like the wind / He moved without ever slowing down //
>
> (*Raden Umar Yunani sira kadulu / ing jro swapĕnanirêki / anglangi tĕngahing laut / lauting sagara gĕtih / anuli kanyut maring lod // Yata kaget sira Wong Menak awungu / anuli sira alinggih / nĕhĕr ta sira angun-ngun / dahat sangsaya ing ati / rinasa-rasêng twas mangko // Winrĕtakĕn sirêng Umarmaya sampun / ri swapĕnanirêng uni / Umarmaya sira matur / abĕcik amba puniki / tumutur rumuhun mangko //* [...] *Lingira Amir Umarmaya den asru / mangkata kita den aglis / Umarmaya amit sampun / yata mangkat kadi angin / lampahira datan alon //* (*Stories of Amir*, VI.111–115))

This leads into an adventure that includes Umar Yunani's murder (a *crime passionnel*) and ends with the conquest and conversion of Kashmir by Amzyah.

Overall, then, it is from strong and purposive emotion that storylines start. The affect may be a sequence or otherwise complex, or simple, but it is conspicuous and its ends, too, are clear. It may belong to the protagonist

7 One of his sons.

8 *Amba* ("your servant") is a self-depreciating first-person pronoun.

9 Umar Yunani.

whose movement is narrated in the storyline, like Sadad Kabul Umar and later his son. Alternatively, it belongs to that protagonist's motivator (Amzyah in the previous example, Herman and others in the emotional scheming I began the summary with). An ambient sensibility may also have this plot-engendering function. Baktak's evil in Kaus is a case in point. He composes a letter to King Sadad suggesting he attack Mecca. It is brought to Abyssinia and read out. "The king was elated when he heard / everything the letter contained / His Majesty was carried away" (*Sang Nata garjitângrungu / sawi-rasaning rĕrĕpi / lamlam twasira Sang Katong*; *Stories of Amir*, I.29). Sadad marches on Mecca.

2.4 *Rebooting the Epic Plot*

There is an exception to the common pattern that episodes start with feelings or a pronounced atmosphere. At one juncture in *Stories of Amir* there occurs what could be called an affect-free reboot of the epic narrative. The previous episode was concluded with the conversion of an infidel king to Islam. He joins Amzyah's ranks and all celebrate. What is narrated next is how Amzyah appears in audience. With no trace of affect he asks his warriors and allies:

> "Of what use is it to have / the infidels encamped outside the city walls?" / King Sarkab said with reverence / "It is right to repel them by means of war" //
>
> (*paran pedahe iya / kafir anêng jaba kutha akukuwu / matur sira Raja Sarkab / pĕnĕd tinundhung ing jurit //* (*Stories of Amir*, IV.4))

Amzyah follows Sarkab's advice. In this epic, in which Islamization is a major trope, the mere proximity of infidel enemies may be sufficient reason for embarking on a new adventure.[10]

2.5 *Quickenings, Changes of Course, Conclusions*

Besides starting storylines, feelings keep storylines going. A string of stanzas may be infused with an affectful ambience. The evocative poetic styles described earlier are typically used for this. Or a storyline is invigorated with a burst of feeling. This tends to happen when protagonists on different journeys meet, and their storylines are thereby joined. Various emotions may be

10 This is so also in another early Javanese rendition of the Hamza epic, which recounts almost his entire life (e.g., Poerbatjaraka 1940: 19).

involved, depending on the relationship between these protagonists and what preceded. Before enemies come to blows on the battlefield, for instance, they exchange intimidating boasts and angry insults. Affect may also steer a storyline in a new direction, triggering further journeying to a destination not envisioned earlier. The example of Amzyah not saying anything when he hears that back at home his wife is under threat shows how sophisticated the interweaving of emotion-induced storylines may be. The normal narrative pattern in *Stories of Amir* – namely that strong emotion triggers movement – suggests that Amzyah wants to go there. But this turn in the storyline is cut short by the son of Sadad. Only after his intervening subepisode is Amzyah able to depart for Kaus.

Episodes and their storylines end in affect as well. I have mentioned the general contentment that rounded off an episode early in the text. Another case is the son of Sadad storyette, a concise version of a typical Hamza epic storyline. It ends in the joy felt by both Amzyah's side and that of Sadad's son after the latter has been subjected and converted to Islam. "They made merry day and night / having a drinking-feast / with an exquisite choice of food" (*akasukan dina-ratri / sirândrawina / mwang dhadhaharan adi*). At the other extreme lies the universal sorrow that marks the conclusion of our episode. Aired visibly and audibly by birds, trees, even rocks and the sun, this devastating sadness is narrated in three stanzas in a poetic style that abounds in florid, archaic, and assonant words and phrases, evoking ambient entrancement. It is Amzyah's heartbreak that calls this up in nature. This ending also builds a bridge to the next episode, which will see the grieving Amzyah abducted.

2.6 *An Affective Stance and God*

Meanwhile one particular affect – a meta-affective disposition – stands out in *Stories of Amir* as highly prized but very difficult to maintain. It is expressed in the precept "be stable" (steadfast, *tětěp*), usually said of the heart, the seat of feelings: "be steadfast in your hearts" (*den tětěp twasirêki*). Close to this is *těguh* "firm, steady, resolute," as in "do remain resolute in your heart" (*těguhakěna ing ati*) and – with reference to action – "stay steadily on your course" (*den atěguh ing lampah*). Unlike most affect in the story, *tětěp* and *těguh* are not narrated in the indicative mood but are used in dialogue as optatives or imperatives, as when Umarmaya says to Amzyah who has just heard that his son is hurt: "You must be steadfast, Your Highness / Don't be excessively concerned" (*den atětěp sira Pukulun / sampun sirâsru prihatin*).

Affective stability is desirable in general. A stranger has helped Amzyah to recover from a head injury:

> The Victor in the Battlefield / sensed in his heart that he was indebted to him / Then the Amir spoke and said / "Oh, how exceptional is your love / I have incurred the greatest debt towards you now / Pray be steadfast in your heart / May the Almighty recompense" //
>
> (*Yata sira Jayêng Rana / kapiutangan rasane twasniki / dan lingirÂmir amuwus / dhuh antyanta sihira / agung utangingsun ing sira mangkweku / den tětěp uga twasira / mogha walěsěn ing Widi //* (*Stories of Amir*, IV.55))

This is about maintaining an ethical sensibility, but the ideal of constancy is usually brought up at moments when the addressee has lost their equilibrium. Abraham appears in a dream to Amzyah who is mourning Munigarin: "The Prophet Abraham said / 'As to the present moment, you / must not be weighed down in your heart / Rather you should be steadfast'" (*Nabi Ibrahim angucap / ana pon mangke sirêki / aja sak ing atinira / tětěpa uga sirêki*). Abraham appears as a messenger from God. The fact that God Himself is the implied source of the message suggests that affective stability is part of the religiosity promoted in the text.

This value is invoked most prominently in advice from Umarmaya to Amzyah. It resonates in the vehemence with which Umarmaya argues against Amzyah's going to Abyssinia to free his father-in-law. Umarmaya wants to convince Amzyah not to act on his emotions. He suspects that Amzyah's response will lead to further misery. Umarmaya, then, tries to manage Amzyah's plot-steering emotions, to prevent chains of affect, to break up the plot. He is unsuccessful.

There is a second way in which Amzyah fails, from time to time, to live up to standards. He reveals to an opponent on the battlefield:

> When all of these rulers / lose their lives or are laid in bonds / it does not happen by my personal desire / Such is simply the decree of God / Who disposes over life and death // It is made to happen through my hands / I have been granted a powerful ability by the Almighty / so I am able to take their lives /
>
> (*sakwehing kang para ratu / mati muwah kabanda / dudu lawan karsaningsun dhawak iku / iya uwus ukuming Hyang / anitah ing pati urip // Minargakěn tanganingwang / sinung pangawasa dera Hyang Widi / kawasa mateni ingsun /* (*Stories of Amir*, X.38–39))

Indeed, Amzyah is addressed by his friends as "commander of the faithful who / is well liked by the Divine Spirit" (*amiril mukminin kang / sinukan dera Hyang Suksma*). Yet the affect Amzyah raises in God is not always fondness. God is "the One Who reigns over all desire" (*Sang Amurbêng Kapti*; Arps 2021: 658), but Amzyah repeatedly loses sight of the crucial importance of God's disposition (*titah*, *panitah*). Sending away his companions from Mecca, Amzyah asserts he will not change his mind, but

> As the Amir declared this / he did not have an eye to the Will / He failed to say "Allah so desires" / He incurred the Almighty's wrath / Great misfortune would be coming upon him //
>
> (*kalângucap sirÂmir / nora lumiring kahayun / tan angling masa'Allah / olih duhkaning Hyang Widi / balahi agung kang tuměka ing sira //* (*Stories of Amir*, IX.65))

Amzyah's certitude about the future moves God to modify his storyline. In due course, Amzyah will realize the error of his ways and ask forgiveness, but the pattern will repeat itself.

The ways feelings serve plot in *Stories of Amir* yields a narrative paradox. Amzyah and his kin and companions move in an eventful world. On the one hand, destabilizing affect should be avoided, conducive affect sustained. Steadiness of heart is the ideal and God's anger should not be aroused. These key ideologies underly the narrative in the affective realm and – it is important to realize – are promoted by it. On the other hand, time and again God sends disconcerting dreams, ploys to incite emotion succeed, Amzyah cannot contain his feelings while Umarmaya fails to manage them, and Amzyah lapses in his piety, provoking God's displeasure. Those who are fond of stories may be grateful. Affect is the source of the protagonists' movements and adventures, hence of plot, hence of the telling of Hamza's epic.

3 Affect-in-Action Paradigms in the Java Sea World

My analysis thus far has shown that the affect-plot nexus in *Stories of Amir* consists of four interplaying processes. In the realm of narrative structure, the text is built from a recurrent abstract pattern of affect (feeling or atmosphere) starting, re-energizing, modifying, and concluding storylines, which are constructed around a protagonist's goal-oriented movement. On top of this comes the common, plainly discernible motif of attempts, sometimes by means of

"white lies," to manage a hero's emotions, that is, in narratological terms, to shield that hero from storyline-inducing affects (often unsuccessfully) or on the contrary to arouse such affects. Third, coupled with this is the repeated injunction to maintain stability of feeling and attitude. And fourth, in the background hover the doctrine of God's disposition and the likelihood of Him intervening in a hero's storyline to expose them to difficulty, and indeed of Him creating new, taxing storylines for him or her, especially as their missteps provoke His ire. The affective dimension of *Stories of Amir* is fast-moving, rich, and nuanced. Was this unusual in the narrative economy of the sixteenth-century Java Sea world? How widespread was the affect-in-action paradigm (let me call it that) that underlay this text and was propounded by it? Questions about affect open up a dimension of Javanese and Malay narrativity that turns out to be varied and fascinating. I offer some initial findings.

The *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, which contains the exemplar of the Bodleian manuscript's *Stories of Amir*, was rendered into Malay from Persian possibly in Pasai (north Sumatra) in the second half of the fourteenth century (Guillot 2020: 423). The Malay text continued to circulate in the Java Sea world after its translation into Javanese.[11] On the face of it, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*'s affect-in-action paradigm differs from that of *Stories of Amir*. The passage in which Harman Syah[12] motivates Hamzah to rescue Nusyirwan (Samad Ahmad 1987: 397–98) refers to Hamzah surely obeying his mother-in-law's wish because he is considerate of his wife. The mother-in-law's letter asks what the public will say (about Nusyirwan's imprisonment), appealing to Hamzah's sense of justice. Next to these intimations of affect the passage contains just one explicit mention, namely Umar Umaiyah's prediction that Hamzah will regret it (*menyesal*) if he goes to Abyssinia. To mention another kind of affect I have discussed for *Stories of Amir*: in an earlier episode there is no mention of an ambience of evil generated by Chancellor Bakhtik; the narration starts later in the episode and refers back to Bakhtik's wicked scheming only indirectly (Samad Ahmad 1987: 353). Likewise, the focal episode ends with Hamzah's devastation over his wife's death, but this is not reflected in universal sorrow, let alone one evoked through a markedly poetic style (1987: 407).

In the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, then, affect seems not to be in a constant embrace with the protagonists' movements. Upon closer reading and reflection

11 There are, for instance, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* manuscripts from Batavia (Van Ronkel 1908: 195; 1909: 249–50) and Surakarta (Florida 1993: 241).

12 Herman's name in this version. The *dramatis personae*'s names in the different Malay and Javanese versions are mostly similar. If the correspondence is evident, I will refrain from noting it.

as well as contextualization, however, this impression turns out to be unwarranted. To be sure, the Malay text is more economically worded than *Stories of Amir*, but the same plot developments occur. The protagonists are likewise set in motion by their and others' feelings and sentiments, not by narration but by inference. The tale is pale in terms of named affects, but the action is animated by them nonetheless. The injunction to stabilize one's heart (in Malay: *pertetapkan hatimu* and variants) is as prevalent in the Malay as in the Javanese, as are God's disposition and His likes and dislikes.

Two explanations are likely for the understatedness of affect in the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*. The first is that, for this work and possibly for the literary culture of Malay prose narratives (*hikayat*) generally, the onus of feeling was on readers and listeners. The plot is there, full of potentiality for empathizing. Indeed, a famous episode in the *Malay Annals* (*Sejarah Melayu*) suggests that the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* was read for its ability to inspire bravery in battle (Braginsky 2004: 116). In the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*'s preface, the narrative is framed as removing sadness from the world and affording cheer to all people (Samad Ahmad 1987: xxx). It was neither intended nor considered to be emotionally flat. Additionally (not alternatively), the text's elementary affect may have been elaborated by reciters or storytellers. The Malay *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* used to be read in Aceh, for instance, while its contents featured in storytelling there (Snouck Hurgronje 1894: 183). Until at least 1981 it was in a storyteller's active repertoire; one recorded telling, in Acehnese larded with Malay, lasted 15 hours (Durie 1996: 130–35). This is precisely how the Persian prose text used to function in Iran and Mughal India: as a source for oral retelling and elaboration (Pritchett 1991: 3–8, Khan 2015, Yamamoto 2021).

All the same there are diverse ways of building a story, of dealing with affect, and of connecting affect and courses of action. The affect-in-action paradigm of *Stories of Amir* is not self-evident. In other Javanese-language texts composed in the sixteenth century other paradigms obtain, even when they share the same poetic form as *Stories of Amir*, that of *kidung* or *gita*, "song."

The *Song of Surajaya* (*Kidung Surajaya*), dated 1510 CE, recounts the peregrinations of several students of Hindu-Buddhist religiosity from guru to guru in the highlands of east and central Java (Kartika 2015). The text is known from manuscripts in a mountain hermit's library probably assembled in the eighteenth century (Kuntara and Van der Molen 2001). The narrative is an allegorical representation of the exploratory search for a way to withstand affective impulses and successfully practice yoga. The obligation to subdue one's emotions, conceived as temptations, is a fundamental premise. Grief motivates the main protagonist to wander aimlessly, as he struggles to overcome it. Later, feelings of love threaten to hold him back, rather than pushing

him on a trajectory to a definite goal as in *Stories of Amir*. While affect management has a prominent place in the form of instructions from gurus and fellow seekers (in episodes that tend to be stationary), the narrative does not posit a higher power intervening in the plot. The individual seekers' struggles to defeat their passions stand central. One affect, however, is cast in a positive light. This is the entrancement called *kalĕngĕngan* in the text. In the affect-packed preamble the narrator frames his narration as a deeply concentrated striving for this sensation while attempting to prevent his thoughts and sense-perceptions from straying (Kartika 2015: 64–65). Thus, *Song of Surajaya* positions itself in the Old Javanese poetical tradition that is occasionally referenced in *Stories of Amir* by means of its rapturous passages. As Zoetmulder explains these Old Javanese aesthetics: "in an experience of oneness that blurs the distinction between subject and object, consciousness of the self vanishes too" (1974: 172). The affect that *Song of Surajaya* attempts to generate, then, is that of yoga. The affect-in-action paradigm that underlies *Song of Surajaya* is yogic.

Song of Sunda (*Kidung Sunda*) is also Hindu-Buddhist, but its affect-in-action paradigm is altogether different. Set in the fourteenth-century kingdom of Majapahit in eastern Java with historical figures as *dramatis personae*, the poem was probably expanded from a shorter text in Bali in the mid-to-late 1500s (Berg 1927b: 5). Like *Stories of Amir*, this heart-rending narrative features love, anger, grief, and a range of other emotions, often in quick succession. This is common in the genre of which *Song of Sunda* is part, known to scholarship as "the historical *kidung*" (Berg 1927a, Zoetmulder 1974: 409–26). Some affect management occurs in the requisite didactic dialogues. But once the affects are considered in relation to dramatic action, notable differences between *Song of Sunda* and *Stories of Amir* surface. While affect is the driving force behind several storylines, often it does not clearly and directly inspire the action. At key moments protagonists precisely do *not* feel what might be expected in the circumstances (a bad omen, advice from senior people), let alone act accordingly. And ultimately, it is not the protagonists' current feeling or agency that directs their storylines but their deeds in earlier incarnations. No personified deity intervenes in the plot, but a force called *Hyang Widhi* ("Divine Universal Order") has an inescapable causal role (Berg 1927b: 50). Aggregating deeds from the main protagonist's former lives, this force inflicts calamity on him (1927b: 46).

Story of Joseph (*Carita Yusuf*; Kitab Yusuf 1981) is Islamic and may hail from the same or a kindred literary environment as *Stories of Amir* (Arps 2021: 663, 672). It is faith-oriented and less mundane than *Stories of Amir*, and its affective repertoire is smaller. Alongside astonishment (*kagawokan*), triggered by human beauty and puzzling feats (which both come from God), it is dominated by love

in various shades and forms. Many opportunities for narrating feeling are not taken up. The principal storylines, focused on Joseph and Jaleka (Arps 1990: 52), do start from affect, and once they have met, a dose of infatuation (hers, not his) gives their now unified storyline new impetus (1990: 47). But several shorter storylines are not triggered by feeling at all. A famous tableau – Jaleka parading Joseph before the courtiers' wives in Egypt to make them experience his irresistible beauty – is a successful attempt to change the plot by managing affect, but not the hero's. Joseph's inner life is not protected by anyone but himself and God, let alone to avoid chains of affect. Affect-related maxims mostly concern death and the last judgment. Their message is: if believers trust in God's love and forgiveness, they need not fear. Joseph incurs God's anger when he asks not God but a fellow human for help; the consequences are dire (Arps 1990: 49–50). But earlier, when Joseph became conceited because of people's reactions to his beauty, everyone in the next settlement he visited was as beautiful as he (1990: 43). In *Stories of Amir* such a lapse typically leads to God's displeasure and a new adventure. More prominent than wrath, indeed, is the fact that Joseph is beloved of God; this leads Him to intervene in his storyline on many occasions.

A Javanese telling of the narrative of Iskandar (Alexander), found in a royal manuscript dated 1729 CE, is said to have been adapted from Malay in the early 1600s (Sudewa 1995: 23, Ricklefs 1998: 46–47). Hamza and Iskandar stories have much in common: their epic nature, geographical setting, and the trope of subjection and conversion of infidel rulers. *Iskandar*'s Malay exemplar, too, was rendered from Persian (Guillot 2020: 427–28). Scrutiny of the Javanese poem reveals that the advice to be steadfast (tětěp) occurs repeatedly. Like in *Stories of Amir* it is held up as a hard-to-achieve affective ideal. It is invoked even in advice that a devil, disguised as a sage, gives a sun-worshiping king, inspiring him to go to war; it is coupled with the advice to "be long-suffering" (*den sabar*).[13] Like in *Stories of Amir*, God intervenes in storylines, mostly at a protagonist's request to help them on their course of action, but also at His initiative, most prominently when He chastises Iskandar for being covetous (*loba*). Although no divine affect is mentioned, in a commentary addressed to the text's readers and listeners the consequences for Iskandar are called "calamity from the Almighty" (*cilakaning Widi*; Sudewa 1995: 120). Against this background of similarities, however, *Iskandar*'s affect-in-action paradigm is quite unlike *Stories of Amir*'s. Feelings are far less frequently narrated. When they are, what triggers them is sometimes unclear. Most storylines simply do

13 Unlike being *tětěp*, the norm of being *sabar* is alive in Javanese culture, as it was in the twentieth century (Geertz 1959: 232, Keeler 1987: 75).

not start from affect, not even implicitly. Most typical in *Iskandar* is responsive emotion that may be strong but does not inspire movement.

Affect-in-action paradigms are not limited to narrative, of course. They are reflected in the earliest surviving Javanese Islamic treatises, in a few manuscripts acquired by the first northwest European traders to come to Java in the late 1590s. The so-called precepts of Shaykh Ibrahim, a list of norms of religious morality (Drewes 1978: 18–23, 62–63; 1954: 32–37, 108–14), contain much affect, but not usually formulated in relation to action. The precepts that do concern affect-in-action lead us to Islamic asceticism. Being compassionate to one's fellow creatures, a condition for asceticism (Drewes 1954: 32; 1978: 18), receives little emphasis in *Stories of Amir* and *Iskandar*, worldly as their orientations are, although it is in line with *Story of Joseph*. Likewise, the need to be aware of the evil of one's passions so that one may avoid gratifying one's desires (Drewes 1954: 34; cf. 1978: 20) accords with the ethos of *Story of Joseph* and is prominently thematized once in *Iskandar*, but it is far from the impassioned affect-in-action paradigm of *Stories of Amir*. Regretting and repenting to God over vain and improper conduct (Drewes 1954: 32; 1978: 18), a retrospectively oriented form of affect-and-action that clears the way for new courses of action, is done by protagonists once in *Stories of Amir* (Arps 2021: 658), once, though by implication, in *Iskandar* (Sudewa 1995: 123), and repeatedly in *Story of Joseph*, where it is moreover thematized in an aside commentary (Arps 1990: 38, 39, 41, 43, 49, 50). Finally, a precept that features in *Stories of Amir* is: do not state that what you will do is certain and do say "God willing" (Ar. *in shā'a Allāh*) (Drewes 1954: 3–5; 1978: 20–21[14]).

These correspondences show that socio-religious principles involving feelings in relation to action were promoted to sixteenth-century Muslim communities in narratives as well as didactic treatises. When *Stories of Amir* was rendered from Malay possibly in 1526 or later (Arps 2021: 662), its configuration of affect management, stability of heart, and Divine intervention was retained, while the Malay text's mostly tacit tendency to have affect start, steer, and close storylines was not just retained but made explicit. It is possible that *Stories of Amir* was written as an Islamic contribution to an extant Javanese-language genre of which *Song of Sunda* was a specimen, roughly that of "the historical kidung," known from Bali but probably once written and heard in Java too. If so, in terms of affectfulness *per se*, *Stories of Amir* followed an established local model. But not in the links it made between affect and courses of action. There the Malay text's potential was elaborated. Despite its Javaneseness, then, in key components of the affective realm the poem reflects its Malay and ultimately its Persian ancestor. Too little research has been done to state whether the

14 The former text does not mention the Arabic phrase.

affect-in-action paradigm of *Stories of Amir* – passionate, social and worldly, immediate, goal-oriented, but flawed and cut short at crucial moments – was unique, but indications are that it stood out in the narrative economy of the sixteenth-century Java Sea world.

4 A Brief Look at Other Hamza Texts in Javanese

How did this Hamza affect turn out in later texts? A short sketch must suffice. The so-called Yasadipuran version of the Hamza epic is a long narrative poem of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century that was repeatedly published from the 1880s onwards and, by all accounts, became immensely popular. In the edition issued in the 1930s by the colonial government's publishing house Bale Pustaka, the episode we have considered is in a volume titled *The Nobleman's Pining* (*Menak Gandrung*). Although it is cast in very different and far more elaborate wordings than *Stories of Amir*, and there are divergences of detail, the plot of this episode and its affective impulses are the same as those in *Stories of Amir* (Menak Gandrung 1934: 16–22).

The Yasadipuran version was probably expanded from a rendition that has survived in a royal manuscript of 1715, labelled "the Menak Kartasura" by Poerbatjaraka (1940: 9–33). Its version of the same episode is much shorter than *Stories of Amir* but, again, identical in outline.[15] Although Muninggarin's reading of her mother's letter is not described, the same appeals to emotion occur. As to two other affective passages in *Stories of Amir* we have considered: Baktak's evil ambience is there in rudimentary form, as a single-sentence soliloquy, "For a long time there has been no war" (*měngko lami nora aprang*). Albeit shorter, less elaborate, and less pervasively Old Javanese in tone, the universal grief caused by Ambyah's mourning is recounted as well. Later, however, the author of the Yasadipuran version would embrace both passages with relish. Baktak's soliloquy was extended:

> Let Chancellor Bĕstak be described / He was thinking to himself / "If the world is merely like this / without any warfare going on / how remarkably still and empty it is / Much better if there are many wars" /
>
> (*Ki Patih Bĕstak winuwus / apikir piyambakira / mangkenea jagad iki / nora nana pĕpĕrangan / iya tĕka sĕpi wae / abĕcik akeh pĕprangan* / (Menak Kuristam 1982: 68))

15 It is an open question how the Menak Kartasura is related to the version of the epic reflected in *Stories of Amir*. Similarities in wording suggest that they are connected.

The part about Hamza's mourning received extensive narrative emphasis and lent the volume *The Nobleman's Pining* its title.

5 Three Puppetry Performances (1985, 2019, 2020)

Certain episodes of the epic were evidently so memorable that they remained in the narrative repertoire. They are performed in several genres of puppetry in Central Java.

5.1 Jobin Defects *by Dhalang Sindu* (*Rod Puppetry, 1985*)

One genre is *wayang golek*, rod-puppet theatre. The play *Jobin Defects* (*Jobin Mbalik*) recounts our illustrative episode, though it ends before Hamza's mental breakdown. A transcript of the texts spoken and sung during an all-night performance in 1985, along with an English rendition, was published as Sindu Jotaryono 1999. The puppeteer was Sindhu Jataryana (1919–1988), popularly known as Dhalang Sindu (Figure 4.1), from the district of Mirit, Kebumen regency, near the south coast of western Central Java. According to local wayang criticism two kinds of affect were design features of *Jobin Defects*. It was

FIGURE 4.1 Dhalang Sindu in performance. On stage, left to right: Jayengrana weeping, Umarmaya, horse
PHOTO BERNARD ARPS, 4–5 DECEMBER 1982

deemed to bring bad luck (or even considered taboo; Setiodarmoko 1988: 17), particularly because it depicts the death of Hamza's wife Muninggar; its emotional scenes would, in addition, impact the puppeteer (Van der Putten 1986: 106). Yet it was a standard play in Dhalang Sindu's repertoire (1986: 157). It displayed an altogether different kind of affect as well: Hamza's love for his kin and his loyalty towards his father-in-law (Sunarto 2011: 240).

Let me summarize the beginning of our focal episode to illustrate. Like earlier, affect is explicitly noted. It was represented in words but also through *suluk* ("mood songs" sung by the puppeteer), the music of the accompanying gamelan orchestra, and puppet movement or posture. These are among the regular means of evoking mood, character, and atmosphere in Javanese puppetry (Arps 2016: 451–54, 464, 467).

> Jayengrana (Hamza) gives audience. When all puppets are on-stage, a serene mood song is sung followed by a tenser one. After greeting his advisers, Jayengrana says that he has heard rumors that his father-in-law Nursewan and Chancellor Bĕstak are held prisoner by the king of Abyssinia, Sadat Kaběli Ngumar. Umarmaya and the other advisers wonder whether Sadat, supposedly their ally (and thus also Nursewan's), has turned callous (hard-hearted, *tĕgĕl*, *tega*, *kolu*) towards Nursewan. As signalled by a sad mood song during which Dhalang Sindu has Jayengrana's puppet cover its face with its sash, Jayengrana is overwhelmed with grief and weeps out of sympathy with his father-in-law's distress. Those present try to bring Jayengrana to his senses and wonder what is moving King Sadat. Perhaps, Umarmaya suggests, he is trying to teach Nursewan and Bĕstak a lesson, as they stubbornly remain at odds with Jayengrana. A tense mood song signals that Jayengrana makes up his mind. He will travel to Abyssinia to release Nursewan from his misery. Umarmaya and the others should guard the city. To the accompaniment of a vigorous gamelan piece, Jayengrana leaves.
>
> Umarmaya expresses anxiety about Jayengrana's fate. This may be a trap. He will follow Jayengrana. (Sindu Jotaryono 1999: 116–23)

The particulars of this version differ from *Stories of Amir*. Puppetry performances – of Hamza and other epic repertoires – traditionally begin with a formal audience of a ruler facing his chancellor, allies, relatives, and other advisers. Their dialogue features differences of opinion about a central issue. Here the raw narrative material is cast into this mold. It allows the puppeteer to bring out the *dramatis personae*'s individual temperaments and emotions, and to set the episode's plot in motion. The intricately layered configuration of

protagonists, communications, and sentiments that leads Amzyah to leave for Abyssinia in *Stories of Amir* has a simpler counterpart here, even if Nursewan is not alone but accompanied by Bĕstak.[16] God's will is not invoked. Yet in this episode and in Dhalang Sindu's performance of *Jobin Defects* generally, plot and affect are likewise closely interwoven. It is feelings that get protagonists underway to achieve some purpose. The story ends in disaster for Jayengrana. It is remarkable that puppetry's additional means of representing affect, particularly suluk and orchestral music, occur at precisely those points where *Stories of Amir* narrates affect by naming feelings or describing emotive responses. Suluk are sung and music is played, evoking affect, when storylines commence, to resume and reinvigorate them, when different characters' storylines are joined, when a course of events changes direction, and to conclude.

5.2 Jayengrana Poisoned *by Ki Yuwono* (*Rod Puppetry, 2019*)

Possibly in part because of the misgivings surrounding it, the story of *Jobin Defects* remains in the active repertoire of Javanese rod puppetry, not only in Kebumen. Under the title of *Jayengrana Poisoned* (*Jayengrana Racun*), Ki Yuwono performed it in a four-hour performance in Yogyakarta in May 2019 (Yuwono 2019). Ki Yuwono is a grandson of Ki Widiprayitno, Yogyakarta's celebrated rod-puppeteer who rose to fame in the 1950s and was based in Sentolo, south-west of the city.

Although the plot corresponded to the version performed by Dhalang Sindu 34 years earlier and was coterminous with it, the story was not entirely the same. In line with recent stylistic developments in Javanese puppetry, there was a so-called *prolog* before the first audience scene (Emerson 2022). It showed a *tête-à-tête* between Jobin and Sadat Kaběli Ngumar, in which Sadat claims to have a plan for eradicating Jayengrana that will enable Jobin to win Muninggar. The atmosphere is one of boisterous crudeness and evil. When Sadat has left, Jobin bursts into a love song for Muninggar, creating an air of infatuation (with humorous touches as the puppeteer has Jobin make *risqué* allusions to actual people). The prolog, then, told a backstory dense with moods and emotions.

The ensuing audience scene resembled Dhalang Sindu's but with different accents. When Jayengrana asks Jobin (who attends the audience) for his view, after a tense mood song Jobin boldly voices his eagerness to attack Abyssinia

16 Behind this lies a kinship-based narrative logic. Nursewan is Hamza's father-in-law, while Bĕstak is Umarmaya's. Hamza and Umarmaya's status as paired protagonists – the latter being the former's adviser and helper – is counterbalanced by that of Nursewan and Bĕstak as paired antagonists. See Arps 2023 on kinship as a principle by which South/Southeast Asian epics tend to expand.

FIGURE 4.2 Umarmaya is expelled by Jayengrana. Left to right: Jayengrana, Umarmaya, an ally, Jobin
KI YUWONO'S PERFORMANCE, 2019, LIVE-STREAMED ON YOUTUBE BY SAMIAJI CHANNEL IN COLLABORATION WITH PEPADI DIY AND DINAS KEBUDAYAAN DIY

and capture Sadat, whom he claims to loathe. Jobin becomes increasingly agitated when he is reprimanded by Umarmaya, who believes that Sadat is merely trying to teach Nursirwan [*sic*] and Bĕstak a lesson. Jayengrana too becomes enraged and rudely orders Umarmaya to leave. After an abrupt gamelan piece that musically enhances the extreme tension, Umarmaya responds that he doesn't mind (Figure 4.2) and leaves. Afterwards Jayengrana claims to have acted based on the feeling (*rasa*) that he is right, and in order to uphold the authority of a king who commands other kings. Overall, then, the *prolog* and this scene abound in feelings that rapidly follow one another, that surge and spread, and are used to justify action. Again, the affective realm is the wellspring of initiative.

5.3 *A Shadowplay Performance by Ki Suluh Juniarsah* (2020)

The last performance was a three-hour shadowplay by Klaten-based puppeteer Ki Suluh Juniarsah. The first half told the episode we have been considering. After Muninggar's death it would continue with the epic's next episode. Ki Juniarsah opened with a prolog.

> Jayengrana and Muninggar are courting. The music, singing (a male-female duet), and choreography (a slow moving around each other)

> build an atmosphere of amorous fondness. Jayengrana takes his leave (Figure 4.3) because Muninggar's mother, his mother-in-law, has been weeping. He feels he must go to Abyssinia. Muninggar will not be disappointed because his departure expresses his loyal devotion to his father-in-law. She should not be apprehensive; he will return shortly. Jayengrana strokes and kisses her face, then leaves. (Suluh Juniarsah 2020: 0.05.20–0.11.50)

This part of the prolog (which continued for five more minutes) was imbued with romantic and spousal love, expressed in music, discourse, and *mise-en-scène*. It depicted a senior family member's grief as the prime reason for leaving. Loyal devotion – *bĕkti*, a recognized feeling (rasa) in the central Javanese affective economy – was added at the end, as was a negation of two felt responses that, by current normative standards, could be expected: Muninggar's disappointment (*kuciwa*, Indonesian *kĕcewa*) that her husband will be away, and apprehension (*waswas*) over his fate. The scene with its amorous atmosphere was entirely unlike the multiplex emotional scheming that began the episode in *Stories of Amir* and the heated discussions in *Jobin Defects* and *Jayengrana Poisoned*. But in Ki Suluh's performance, too, the hero's departure brimmed with emotions. Affects pushed him to go, other affects threatened to pull him back. The story had its way: he departed.

FIGURE 4.3 Jayengrana (left) takes his leave of Muninggar
KI SULUH JUNIARSAH'S PERFORMANCE, 2020, LIVE-STREAMED ON YOUTUBE CHANNEL BUDAYA MAJU BY DIREKTORAT PENGEMBANGAN DAN PEMANFAATAN KEBUDAYAAN, DIREKTORAT JENDERAL KEBUDAYAAN, KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN DAN KEBUDAYAAN. DETAIL

6 Conclusion

I have characterized the sixteenth-century *Stories of Amir* as a thoroughly affectful telling of part of the Hamza epic, in which feelings inspire the beginning, continuation, joining, changing, and conclusion of courses of dramatic action. As it turns out, four hundred years later so are *Jobin Defects*, *Jayengrana Poisoned*, and Ki Suluh's performance. There is no space to demonstrate that in these late twentieth- and twenty-first-century performances, affect management featured as well. Suffice it to say that Umarmaya continues to try to protect Jayengrana from negative emotions, and to try to break up dangerous chains of affect – still without much success. On the other hand, adages meaning "be steadfast in your heart" are old-fashioned now, and God's interventions in a hero's storyline are rarely highlighted. This is not surprising. After another four centuries of Islamization, partly through Hamza narratives, these once explicitly iterated values and doctrines are commonsense and current. They have moved from text to context.

The ways affect operates in relation to dramatic action in *Stories of Amir* is remarkably similar to Javanese puppetry performance, not only when the repertoire is from the Hamza epic but also in genres with other epic story matter. Yet in literary narratives roughly contemporaneous with *Stories of Amir*, affect used to function in quite other ways. The rudiments of *Stories of Amir*'s affect-in-action paradigm were present in the epic before it was rendered into Javanese. It appears that these principles were injected into the extant genre of the historical kidung. This yielded the interplay of processes that makes up the Hamza affect: feelings inspiring movement, the management of (important, beloved) people's feelings, the almost unattainable ideal of emotional stability, and God's plot-changing measures occasioned by His love and wrath.

These observations suggest that the Hamza affect has been weighty in Javanese literary, performance, and indeed cultural and religious history. The epic of Hamza spread and sustained an action-oriented sensibility in the Java Sea world. This epic may not have been the sole means (my restricted survey cannot confirm such a sweeping claim) but it was prominent. It helped to promote the sense that affect of all sorts is a moving force toward a definite end.

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CHAPTER 5

Sunan Bonang's Teaching: Ethical Sufism in Sixteenth-Century Java

Yumi Sugahara

Abstract

The Islamisation of Java is assumed to have been facilitated by the spread of Sufism, which captured the hearts and minds of mystical Javanese. The peaceful spread of Islam in Javanese society is attributed to the legendary nine saints (*wali*) who were active in the 15th and 16th centuries. However, few contemporaneous sources on these saints exist, and only manuscripts written in later periods survive.

Sunan Bonang, the subject of this chapter, is one of the most famous of the nine saints. He had many disciples and is said to have had a great religious influence on Demak, the first king of the first Islamic kingdom of Java. Sunan Bonang is portrayed in later manuscripts as representing a 'righteous' saint who punished heretical teachings; one of the few surviving manuscripts from the 16th century is attributed to Sunan Bonang himself and, interestingly, it contains a treatise on Islamic doctrine. This chapter aims to discuss Islamic doctrine of the time by analysing that manuscript.

Keywords

Sufism – Islamization – heresy – Wahdat al-wujud

1 Introduction

The Islamization of Java is apparent since the fourteenth century when Islamic graves began to be built near the Hindu-Majapahit royal court. It has been assumed that the process was made easy by the spread of Sufism, a current within Islam which seeks union with God, and as such may have appealed to the mystically-minded Javanese. The same explanation is used in connection with pre-Islamic pantheistic philosophy, which seems to oppose the direct adoption of Islamic monotheism and jurisprudence. However, we have not had adequate discussions of the consequences of adopting the term "Sufism."

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According to Yasushi Tonaga, Sufism can be analyzed along three axes: mysticism, ethics, and popular veneration, with changing preferences over the course of time (Tonaga 2005). Still, we do not know what type of Sufism we are dealing with, and how it developed in Java.

In Java, the Sufi saints referred to as *wali*s are well known. Local society believes that Islam spread peacefully in Java as an achievement of the legendary Nine walis (J. *wali sanga*).[1] Actually, the number of walis is not nine, and their names are not fixed. One of the earliest Javanese manuscripts,[2] called the Ferrara *kropak*,[3] describes the Deliberation of Saints (J. *Musawaratan para wali*) held on the Gunung Kadaton, and the number of the walis who appear there is eight (Drewes 1978). Probably, later Javanese tradition set the number of walis at nine. The famous wali sanga are included in the larger number of walis who appear in the annals of the Javanese kingdoms and are believed to have spread the faith of Islam to this island in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. Many legends in all areas of Java ascribe numerous elements of culture to them (musical instruments, shadow plays, works of literature and so on). However, the truth of such stories, or sometimes even the very existence of some of these walis, is difficult to prove because of the limited availability of historical sources. Some walis have several tombs in different areas. Most of the manuscript sources on the walis are relatively recent copies from the nineteenth century.

Sunan Bonang, whom I discuss in this chapter, is one of the most famous walis among the nine. His father, Sunan Ampel, is the progenitor of the nine walis and is believed to have been the teacher of Raden Patah, the first king of Demak, which was the first Islamic kingdom in Java. He himself also converted Sunan Kalijaga, a legendary hero throughout Java, to Islam. In the popular story of Siti Jenar, Sunan Bonang is the representative of the "right" walis who punished Siti Jenar for being heretical (nevertheless, Siti Jenar has enjoyed popularity in Javanese society to the present). The *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the chronicle of the Mataram kingdom, only mentions that Sunan Bonang had many disciples and exerted extensive religious influence, especially after Raden Patah defeated Majapahit and became the king of Demak. One of the deeds attributed to him was the forging of a holy sword, part of the royal treasure.

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1 The presence of walis has created a variety of meanings in Javanese literature; see the chapters by Ronit Ricci, Verena Meyer, and Els Bogaerts.

2 According to Drewes, the date of the compilation of this text can be fixed at the 17th century at the earliest (Drewes 1978: VII).

3 *Kropak* means a book made of leaves of the *lontar* palm (*Borrassus flabellifera*).

Sunan Bonang is also credited as the author of many religious poems, as Drewes (1968) emphasizes. The most famous of these is one of the few surviving sixteenth-century manuscripts, which B.J.O. Schrieke estimated in his 1916 doctoral dissertation to have been written by Sunan Bonan himself (Schrieke 1916). What is even more interesting is that the content of this manuscript is not the legendary tales common in the later manuscripts and oral traditions of Java, but rather a discussion of Islamic doctrine. G.W.J. Drewes (1899–1992), who published the text of the manuscript in transcription with an English translation in 1969, gave the text the title of "The admonitions of Seh Bari." It is a valuable source of information on Islamic doctrine in the sixteenth century, especially because the sayings and deeds of walis known in the oral tradition of popular veneration are legendary and insufficient for analyzing the contents of their doctrine. In the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the Mataram Kingdom Chronicle, the walis have the supernatural power of prophecy and have a role in giving legitimacy to the kingdoms, but their doctrine is never discussed.

It is difficult to ascertain whether these latter teachings can represent the religious situation of the time in Java. As for Sunan Bonang, it stands to reason that a meticulous comparison between the text of the sixteenth century manuscript and the other writings ascribed to him is urgently called for. However, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss some focal points of Islamic doctrine apparently current at the time by analyzing the sixteenth century text, not to ascertain its authorship. Rather, we should take into consideration the meaning of the claim that Bonang wrote this text.

Before going into the main topic, since the purpose of this volume is to explore new directions in the study of Javanese literature, it is important to ask whether this sixteenth century text falls into the category of "literature" in the first place. Therefore, this chapter follows the definition of Javanese literature as suggested by Th.G.Th. Pigeaud in his book *Literature of Java*, i.e., "any text written in Javanese is considered as belonging to literature and registered as such, because all texts can supply information on Javanese civilization in its various aspects" (Pigeaud 1967, 1: 2). According to the four-stage development of Javanese literature he proposed, this text belongs to the *Pasisir* (north coast) literature phase, the third era which began around 1500 CE when Javanese literature developed under the influence of Islam, mainly at the port cities on the north coast. *Pasisir* literature was created by borrowing vocabulary from the Malay, Arabic, and Persian languages. This is because these languages had already been used as a medium to disseminate Islamic literature in Southeast Asia outside of Java. However, many elements of the pre-Islamic Old Javanese literature were also assimilated into Java's northern coast (J. *pasisir*) literature (Pigeaud 1967, 1: 6–7; Robson 1981: 281–88). At first, "the mystic and the legalistic orthodox currents existed side by side," and the mystic legendary tales seem

to have been popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pigeaud listed the text which I discuss here under "Notes on theology and mysticism" (Pigeaud 1967, 1: 78–81). While the content is indeed a doctrinal treatise on theology and mysticism, the format is didactic fiction, depicting a question-and-answer dialogue between a teacher named Seh Bari and his disciple.

2 The Manuscript

The text is contained in Cod. Or. 1928 of Leiden University Library. Before being published by Drewes, it had been published by B.J.O. Schrieke as his dissertation in 1916, under the title "Het boek van Bonang" (the book of Bonang), as mentioned above. The manuscript formed part of a collection of manuscripts in the possession of Bonaventura Vulcanius, professor of Greek at Leiden University in the period 1578–1614. According to Schrieke, the manuscript was acquired at an East Javanese port (Sedayu or Tuban) during one of the first two voyages by the Dutch to Indonesia before 1600. It was probably presented to Vulcanius by one of his students, who was in contact with the organizers of the voyages to the East.

The manuscript consists of 88 pages of Javanese paper measuring 18 by 25 cm. The text numbers 83 pages. The manuscript is "bound in a shabby European cover with a parchment spine and has a double fly-leaf at the front and back" (Drewes 1969: 2). According to Taco Roorda (1801–74, professor of Javanese in Delft and Leiden), the manuscript was written in a type of Javanese script that shows the peculiarities of the north coast of Java, not of Central Java (Drewes 1969: 3).

The author of the text is assumed to be Sunan Bonang, on the basis of what is written by the copyist in the final line of the text: "*Tammat carita cinitra, kang pakrěti Pangeran ing Benang* (Thus ends the written story, the author is the Lord of Bonang)." The text is written in the form of questions and answers exchanged between a teacher, Seh Bari,[4] and his pupil. The name of the pupil is not mentioned, but Schrieke concluded that this pupil must be Sunan Bonang, the text being based on the disciple's memory of the instructions given by his teacher. It is not clear who this "Seh Bari" is. He is not one of the nine walis, nor is he known to be a famous wali. Drewes adds the information that a group of manuscripts originating from Banyumas in Central Java mention the name of Seh Bari as a teacher of a famous school in Karang, Banten, West Java (Drewes

4 Seh Bari is spelled differently across manuscripts: *Sekhul Bari, Sek Bari, Shehul Bari*, and so on. Here I use the spelling Seh Bari in accordance with previous studies.

FIGURE 5.1 *Kitab Pangeran Bonang*, late 16th century (?)
LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, COD. OR. 1928, FF. 2–3

1969: 8–13). In the text, however, the teacher talks about admonitions from imam Ghazali[5] (1058–1111) on heresy to a certain three Javanese teachers as if he were witnessing the scene. It is not clear whether "Seh Bari" really existed, or whether the author of the text created the story for the purpose of preaching.

In this chapter, I do not intend to participate in the debate on whether the author of this text really is Sunan Bonang, or who Seh Bari is.[6] The point on which I focus is that this manuscript was copied in sixteenth-century Java and is ascribed to Sunan Bonang who is a central figure among the walis. This means that this text reflects a contemporaneous discussion, and the copyist insists that the views expressed here are the correct ones.

This text is mentioned by Ricklefs and Zoetmulder in their books (Ricklefs 2006; Zoetmulder 1995), but it has not been fully analyzed, presumably because they thought its content was only a dogmatic argument translated from Arabic literature and did not reflect Javanese society at the time. Here I refer to the translation and transcription of Drewes and Schrieke, but I also use my own

5 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī.

6 Drewes does not dispute the attribution of this 16th-century text to Sunan Bonang in his 1968 article, but in his 1969 publication he presents the chronological impossibility of attributing this student to Sunan Bonang.

when necessary because I found some differences between their two transcriptions, and I also wish to make the translation more literal.[7]

3 The Contents of the Text

At the beginning of the text, the author writes that it contains the words of Seh Bari addressed to his friends about the meaning of *usul suluk* (principles of the knowledge concerning the journey along the mystical path), quoting from the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and the *Tamhīd*:[8]

> *Nyan punika caritanira Sekhul Bari tatkalanira apitutur dhatĕng mitranira kabeh; kang pinituturakĕn wirasaning usul suluk, wĕdaling carita saking kitab Ihya ulumi din, lan saking Tamhid, antukira Sekhul Bari, amĕtheti tingkahing sisimpĕnan, ing nabi wali mukmin kabeh*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 1–2)
>
> This is the tale of Seh Bari when imparting instruction to all his friends as to the meaning of the principles of the knowledge concerning the journey on the mystical path. The narrative comes forth from the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and the *Tamhīd*. Seh Bari took parts that were hidden by all the prophets, walis and true believers.

After this, the conversation between Seh Bari and his pupil begins. The term *suluk* (path) is difficult to define precisely here. But the term being used in the beginning gives the impression that the goal of this text is to teach some form of mysticism. Contrary to that expectation, however, the explanation by Seh Bari about God's transcendence, repeated in several ways, occupies most of their conversations. And, although the author claimed that Seh Bari's teachings are quoted from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*, the main theme of the conversation is God's transcendence and the relationship between the divine being and human beings. Explanations about virtue and vice as described in the *Iḥyā'* only appear in the last part of the text (Cod. Or. 1928: 75–83). The exact title of the *Tamhīd* ("Preface") is unknown, so its contents cannot be identified.

In his explanation of the "correct" teachings on God's transcendence Seh Bari first mentions the names of several persons who spread "wrong" teachings as *kafir*s (infidels). Seh Bari repeatedly explains what kinds of understanding of the faith are wrong, or what kinds of understanding can turn people

7 If a translation does not indicate the source, it is my own translation.

8 *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of Religious Knowledge) is al-Ghazālī's masterpiece, but the exact title of the *Tamhīd* (Preface) is not known, so it is unclear to which book he is referring.

into infidels. The persons and teachings characterized as infidel or wrong are those of *Abdulwahid ibni Makiyah* (ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Makkiyya), *Bataniyah* (Ar. Bāṭiniyya), *Karamiyah* (Ar. Karrāmiyya), *Muntanengiyah* (Ar. Muṭāʿiyya), *Arabiyya* (Ibn al-ʿArabī), and three "*shek*" who are allegedly denounced by al-Ghazālī (*Shek Sufi, Shek Nuri, Shek Jaddi*). Except for Ibn al-ʿArabī (1165–1240), the identity of these persons and schools is not known due to a lack of information. The descriptions of the last three *shek*s are presented as if Seh Bari had had a conversation on this subject with al-Ghazālī himself, as if the two were acquainted. Since al-Ghazālī lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is unlikely that Seh Bari spoke directly with him. However, by claiming to have spoken with al-Ghazālī, we can see that the author wants to emphasize the importance of this teaching on heresy and orthodoxy. The explanations that appear in the text appear to be too difficult for the average Javanese of the time to understand, but they clearly show that there was a conflict of views about what the orthodox teaching was.

4 God's Transcendence; the Use of Negation

The introductory lines are followed by what Seh Bari has to say about the oneness of God:

> *Miwah kawruhana yan sira Pangeran, tunggal tan kakalih; saksenana yan sira Pangeran, asifat sadya suksma, mahasuci tunggalira, tan ana papadhanira, kang mahaluhur*. (Cod. Or. 1928, 2)
>
> And know that the Lord is one and not two. Bear witness that the Lord has eternity and immateriality, that All Pure is His Oneness, and that there is none like him who is Most High.

Here it is claimed that God has two attributes (*sifat*), *sadya* and *suksma*. The word *sadya* has several meanings. In Modern Javanese *sadya* means "aim, intention, purpose, resolution, what a person intends or wills to do; to intend or will (*doel, bedoeling, oogmerk, voornemen, war iemand van zins of gezind is te doen; van zins of gezind zijn, voornemens zijn*)" (Gericke-Roorda 1901, 1: 794). In Old Javanese, *sādhya* means "object to be obtained, aim, goal, desire" (Zoetmulder 1982: 1590). In Malay, *sĕdia* means "already; admittedly; of old; ready; prepared; at all times; immemorial" (Wilkinson 1932: 399). In Javanese, *suksma* means "soul, immaterial." In Old Javanese the word *suksma* (originally

from Sanskrit) means "subtle, unsubstantial, not accessible to the usual organs of perception, but perceptible to those gifted with supernatural powers; invisible, immaterial; to assume an invisible state, disappear" (Zoetmulder 1982: 1841–42).

Next follows the explanation of the meaning of the confession of faith:

> *Iki si lafale, tingkaking anakseni ing Pangeran, Wa-ashhadu an lā ilāha illā'llahu waḥdahu, lā sharīka lahu, wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu'llāhi, tĕgĕse iku ingsun anakseni, kaananing Pangeran, kang anama Allah, kang asifat sadya suksma,*[9] *langgĕng kĕkĕl, wibuh sampurna, purba kadim, sifatira mahasuci, orana Pangeran sabĕnĕre, anging Allah uga Pangeran kang siněmbah, sabĕnĕre kang agung*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 3)[10]
>
> These are the words, the way of bearing witness to the Lord: *Wa-ashhadu an lā ilāha illā'llahu waḥdahu, lā sharīka lahu, wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu'llāhi*, i.e. I bear witness to the eternal and immaterial Being of the Lord whose name is Allah. His attributes are eternity, everlastingness, perfection, and all pureness. There is no Lord but Allah, the object of our devotion, He the truly high.

After this, an explanation is given of the meaning of the word "no" (*ora*/*nora*), because the confession of faith begins with the word of denial.

> *He mitraningsun, karana satuhune lafal nora iku, nora malih angorakĕna satuhuning Allah, Pangeran, nora malih angorakĕna Pangeran siya-siya.* (…)
>
> *Kewala si lafal nora iku, sikĕping wong kang sinung wasil paningale, kang antuk pasthining iman sakadare, ika, kewala lafal nora iku ingkang andĕlingakĕn mahasucining Pangeran, yan tunggal tanpa kufu, iku siptane, kang anduweni sabda iku*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 3–4)
>
> My friends, in reality, pronouncing the word "no" does not negate the reality of Allah as God; nor does it rashly negate the Lord (…)

9 The word *suksma* is omitted in Drewes' book.

10 This sentence is followed by the sentence "*He mitraningsun, sangsiptaning … wong iku mĕne*" in the manuscript, but Drewes judged from the context that the sentence should have come after "*kalawan ingsun anakseni …. wali mu'min kabeh*." and annotated it as such. I agree with Drewes's judgment. Since there are many sentences in the text that begin with "*He mitraningsun*," it can be assumed that the copyist omitted it.

> So, as for the word "no," for one who has been granted the vision of union and has acquired a surety of faith to the greatest extent possible, the word "no" is what shows the Absolute Purity of Allah, who is one without any equal. That is the understanding of one who possesses the Word.

Therefore, Seh Bari uses a word of negation, "no" (*ora*), to explain the singularity of God and he begins his long and esoteric expositions about the differences between the heretical teachings and his own by expounding on the meaning of the word "no." He explains that a heretical scholar named ʿAbd al-Wāḫid b. Makkiyya from Mecca offers wrong understandings of nothingness.

> *He mitraningsun, aja sira kadi ujaring wong sasar.*
>
> *Iku si ujaring wong sasar iku, ʿAbdulwahid arane, mangka angucap ʿAbdulwahid, ibni Makiyah, anak pandhita Mĕkah ika, atunggul sastra, tan apaut kalawan tĕgĕse*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 6–7)

> My friends! Do not follow the opinion of those who went astray! Here is an example of the doctrine of such a person, ʿAbd al-Wahid by name. ʿAbd al-Wahid ibn Makkiyya, the son of a Meccan scholar, taught in keeping with the text, but not in conformity with the meaning. (Drewes 1969: 43)

Then, Seh Bari quotes an account written in Arabic by a scholar named ʿAbd al-Wāḫid, and gives its Javanese translation as follows.

> *Al-aṭhalu 'l-qadīmu, wa-huwa nafsu 'l-muṭlaqi, wa-huwa dhātu'llāh taʿālā, ḥaqqun maʿbūdun, tĕgĕse kang liwung sadya iku, iya iku dhātu ʿllah, sabĕnĕr-bĕnĕre Pangeran kang sinĕmbah,*[11] *tatapi ta nafining Allah, liwunging Allah iku nora yan suwunga, Walakin qabla halki rasuili Muhammad, tatapi ta sadurunging andadekĕn nabi Mohammad,*[12] *anging sira Pangeran kang ana dhewek tanpa rowang, norana kawula sawijia, kadi ta angganing sungging sadurunging andadekĕn panuli, sadurunging anulis, iya iku tĕgĕsing liwung nafi dhātu'llah, nora ing dheweke*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 7)

11 In the manuscript, this sentence is followed by the Arabic quote "*Walakin laisa lidhatihi waqifun*" is written here, but according to Drewes, that sentence should be after "*nora ing dheweke*." I assume that Drewes wrote "Arabic quotation lacking" here because he could not find the Arabic sentence that should be there.

12 Drewes states that there is no written Arabic quote that should be here either.

> *Al-aṭhalu 'l-qadīmu, wa-huwa nafsu 'l-muṭlaqi, wa-huwa dhātu'llāh taʿālā, ḥaqqun maʿbūdun,* It means that Primordial Void (*liwung sadya*) is the *dhatu'llah*, the Essence of the adored Lord, [Arabic quotation lacking] but this Divine nothingness, this Divine Void is not empty. *Walakin qabla halki rasuili Muhammad* i.e.: but before the creation of Muhammad the Apostle [Arabic quotation lacking], the only one in existence was the Lord and He alone, without any servant. He may be compared to a painter before he has made his brush and before he has set to work. This is the meaning of the Essence of Allah being the Void, the Nothingness as such. (Drewes 1969: 43)

The word *liwung* often appears in the text and refers to the *dhatu'llah*, the Essence of God. In the quoted Arabic text, the word *aṭhal* is the original word for *liwung*. This means "destitute, devoid." Drewes translates the word *liwung* as "Void." And it also seems to refer to the condition before the Creator began his act of creation. But it is not clear what the author or Seh Bari means by this word because, according to Modern Javanese dictionaries *liwung* means "furious, raging, senseless, crazed" (Robson and Wibisono 2002: 449), or "frantic from an attack, senseless from despair or sadness; mad with infatuation" ("*verwoed van een aanval, zinneloos van radeloosheid of droefheid; dol van verliefdheid*," Gericke-Roorda 1901, 2: 125). It seems that the meaning is contradictory. In Old Javanese the word means "vast and deep (of water, cave, ravine)" (Zoetmulder 1982: 1042). In Modern Javanese we find the expression *alas gung liwang-liwung*, which means "extensive and dense jungle" (Poerwadarminta 1939: 276; Robson and Wibisono 2002: 449).[13] It is possible that the author imagines a vast and deep jungle when describing the primordial universe. According to Soewojo Wojowasito, we can also find in the Kawi lexicon the expression *aliwung-liwung*, which means "empty; mentally deranged" (Mills 1980: 484). The meaning of the word *sadya* following *liwung* is aim or intention as mentioned above, but here we see that the original Arabic word is *qadīm*, which means "time long since past, old times; time immemorial; infinite pre-existence; timelessness (of God)" (Wehr 1994: 877).

13 *liwang-liwung* means "(A Forest) that is large and lonely (where man may become mad and senseless)" ("*Groot en eenzaam* (*om er dol en zinneloos in te worden*) *van eenn woud*," Gericke-Roorda 1901, 2: 125). De Casparis gives the meaning of the expression *alas gung liwang-liwung* as labyrinthine jungle ("*het labyrinthische oerwoud*"), but states that the word *liwung* is difficult to interpret because in Modern Javanese it means rolling around in a frenzy ("*van razernij rondtollend*") and in Old Javanese it means hollow ("*hol*") (Casparis 1948: 453).

Here it is argued that this liwung sadya, translated by Drewes as Primordial Void, is the Essence of God and that it is not empty. Seh Bari, however, rejects as false Abdul Wahid's explanation that this liwung sadya is the state of the universe before the birth of Muhammad.

> *Mangka anabda Shekhul Bari, he mitraningsun, pamanggihingsun ta nora mongkono, kaya ʿAbdulwahid iku, karana satuhune pangucape ʿAbdulwahid iku kufur ing patang madahab; dhatu llah den-arani nafi, nora ing dheweke, kalawan sira Pangeran den-arani durung andadekĕn ing rasulullah, durung andadekĕn ing sawiji-wiji, iku kufure, karana satuhune kaananing Pangeran, sadya purba*. (Cod. Or. 1928, 8–9)
>
> Seh Bari said, My friends! My opinion is not like that of ʿAbd al-Wāḥid because in fact his statement is disbelief from the perspective of the four *madahab*; the Essence of Allah is said to be nothingness (*nafi*), non-being itself. And he says that God had not created the Apostle or anything yet. This shows his infidelity because in fact, the existence of God is since all eternity.
>
> *Mangka anabda ShehulBari, he mitraningsun, ʿAbdulwahid angucap kang liwung den tĕgĕsaken maring ora ikupon kufur, karana tĕgĕsing liwung iku suksmaning Pangeran, mahasuci sadya ananira tan ana wikana ing suksmanira, tan lyan piambĕkira uga, punika rĕke tĕgĕsing kang liwung sadya wruh ing suksmanira piambĕk*. (Cod. Or. 1928, 9)
>
> Seh Bari said, My friends! It is from unbelief that ʿAbd al-Wāḥid teaches that Void is interpreted as non-being (*ora*), because the meaning of Void is the immateriality of the Lord, whose Being is All-Pure and eternal. And his immateriality is unknown to anyone but Himself. What is meant by the Primordial Void is that He knows His own Immateriality.

Seh Bari explains that liwung does not mean "no" (*ora*) or "empty" (*kosong*) but the suksma (immateriality) of the eternal and transcendent God, an attribute which only He knows. This description of the universe can lead us to imagine pantheistic philosophy even if we cannot make clear yet what the word liwung means. However, Seh Bari continues explaining God's transcendence and His attributes using various concepts, and emphasizes the differences between the characteristics of the Creator and the created, while mentioning the names of erroneous scholars.

5 The Universe and Ibn al-ʿArabī

Among these erroneous scholars Ibn al-ʿArabī is one of the most criticized. First, Seh Bari does so as follows:

> *Utawi ana wong sasar sawiji, Arabiyah arane, akĕcap, sadurunging ana jagad iki kabeh, nama Allah pon dereng nyata, lan dereng ana, iku dhat, mangkana malih dhat iku anyatakakĕn ing asmanira, sarta lan dadine jagad iki, kabeh, ingupamakakĕn dhat iku, kadi angganing wiji-sawiji, awit agodhong, akĕmbang awoh, iku sami amuji ing wit, lintang nekmate, rasane manise, godhong sĕkar woh iku, singgih punika rahasya kabeh, rahasyaning wit, …* . (Cod. Or. 1928: 27–28)

> There is another person who has lost his way. His name is ʿArabiyya. He teaches as follows; Before this world came into being even the name of Allah had not become manifest and did not exist. This was at the grade of Essence (*dhat*). The Essence manifested its names together with the genesis of the universe. The Essence may be compared to a body of origin which comprises leaves, flowers, and fruits. All these praise their origin; delicious and sweet-flavored are the leaves, flowers, and fruits and all this is a mystery, the secret of its provenance.

> *Jagad iki kabeh, gĕlaring wiji sawiji, maksih sawiji tan ana wawaneh. Kadi ta angganing wĕsi bariyuh sawiji, wontĕn dadi tumbak, dadi dhuhung, tatah wadung, panyukur, dadi usu, cacathut, ĕdom kadut, linĕbur pinalu dadi tosan malih, dene si angsale saking wĕsi sawiji, mulih kajatine sawiji; mangkana malih, osiking jiwaraga iki osiking dhatu ʿllah, paningaling kawula iki rahasyaning dhatu ʿllah, kang angucap iki pasthi kinĕkĕlaken sasoring narakaning kafir, kang aněmbah ing brahala ika.* (Cod. Or. 1928: 28–29)

> This whole universe has sprung from one seed, and this is still the only seed. It is like a piece of iron which may be made into a pike, a *kris*, a chisel, a hatchet, a blade for shaving, a *wusu* [a bow-shaped tool for cleaning cotton], pincers or sacking-needle, but melted down all these objects once more become iron; originating from one piece of iron they are made again into one. In the same way the actions of the individual body and soul are the actions of God's essence. The vision of the individual (*kawula*: servant) is the secret of God's Essence. Whoever teaches this is doomed to stay forever at the bottom of the hell of the idolaters.

Since the original Arabic text is not cited, it is unclear whether these explanations of Seh Bari are quotations from Ibn al-ʿArabī. However, although the name of the doctrine that Ibn Arabi is believed to have advocated,[14] *wahdat al-wujud* (Ar. *waḥdat al-wujūd*: Oneness of being / Unity of existence), is not found in the text, Seh Bari clearly states that Ibn al-ʿArabī is a scholar spreading false teachings, and carefully describes the philosophy of Ibn al-ʿArabī using meticulous examples closely related to the daily life of the Javanese. The concept of wahdat al-wujud, often also regarded as "pantheism," holds that God is the only true being and that all other beings are temporary or illusory, and the entire universe is understood as the self-manifestation of the One. After this, Seh Bari continues with his criticism of statements about the existence of the world before the appearance of God. Above all, what Seh Bari is clearly arguing is that even if God and man are one, the actions of man, the servant, absolutely do not determine the actions of God. He is adamant in his criticism of any understanding that would reverse the relationship between God and man.

> *He mitraningsun, sira Pangeran, agĕlar ing kawidagdanira, anyatakĕn ing saniskara kabeh, kasaktenira, dhat sifat afaʾalira, kalawan kawruhana salwiring pakaryanira, norana apakarana saking kawula, utawi anaa sakĕdhep netra ing angĕn-angĕne, anaa uga apakarana saking kawula, kufur*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 30)
>
> My friends! Displaying His wisdom, the Lord made manifest the whole universe, His power, attributes, and works. None is induced by man. Should you imagine even momentarily that this could be the case, then you are guilty of unbelief. (Drewes 1969: 61)

Ibn al-ʿArabī's leading thought is the ontology of wahdat al-wujud and the theory of the "perfect man" (*insan kamil*, Ar. *al-insān al-kāmil*), and there are passages in the text that seem to be an explanation of this "perfect man." However, Seh Bari does not criticize this "perfect man"; Seh Bari uses the expression "excellent man," not perfect man. Seh Bari answers affirmatively to the pupil' s question as to what the *wong lĕwih* (excellent man) is. The term wong lĕwih is translated as "perfect man" by Drewes and Zoetmulder (Drewes 1969: 47, 65; Zoetmulder 1995: 84). This translation can be expected to be made

14 The term was not used in Ibn al-ʿArabī's own writings. Rather, the term was used in the writings of the inheritors of Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought and eventually became popularized as a cosmology.

in reference to Ibn al-ʿArabī's insan kamil (perfect man) even though the term insan kamil does not occur in the text. Seh Bari explains wong lĕwih as follows:

> *Mangka matur Rijal, ya guru amba, punapa ta puniku lampahing wong lĕwih.*
>
> *Mangka anabda ShehulBari, he Rijal, lampahing wong lĕwih iku kabeh, yen ta sira wikana, mangkana*[15] *luputa ing paninggalira iku kabeh, mapan sakathahing kang karasa, ingkang tiningalan, miwah ing osike jiwaraganira iku kabeh ing ĕnĕnge, ing dukacipta nastapane, kabeh iku dudu lan dheweke, saparti bathang lumampah, anging lumampah lan idining*[16] *sih, kaarsaning Pangeran ugi, ika minangka sapatemonira lan Pangeran*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 33–34)

> So, a man said: My Master, what is the behavior of the excellent man (wong lĕwih)? Seh Bari answered: Men! If you do not know it, the behavior of the excellent man is such that his vision is never amiss. All that he experiences and sees and all his individual actions, his silence, distress and sorrow, all these are not his own; he is like a walking corpse, which only walks by the permission and the will of the Lord. This is his unison with the Lord.

We can find another description of this wong lĕwih:

> *mapan ananira iki ingupamakakĕn, kadi angganing wawayangan, kewala si dening kinarsakĕn, enggening anunggal paningalira, ingkang angilo pribadi, kang aningali tiningalan, kang asih sinihan tan lyan piambĕkira, kewala si panduluning kawula iki, pinangka cihna panduluning kang asih, asih sinihan ing dhewekira, dadi nir panduluning kang sinihan, kawibuhan dening sihira kang sadya aningali, kewala si panduluning kawula iki darma amalĕsi*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 34–35)

> Because your existence is like a form of shadow, only by the intention of God, the oneness of yourself reflecting vision that sees and is seen, who loves and is loved by none other than Himself (yourself). Only the servant's vision is proof of the sight of the one who loves, loves the one who is loved by Himself, so there is no vision of the loved. Coupled with God's ever-seeing love, this servant's sight is nothing but a form of reflection.

15 *ma*(*ng*)*sana* in the manuscript.
16 *ingdining* in the manuscript.

Seh Bari describes the wong lĕwih as "a walking corpse" (*bathang lumampah*), but he has no intention to ridicule the person, as he uses the word *lĕwih* (excellent). Wong lĕwih connects with the Creator, but his being is possible only by Divine Ordinance.

In conclusion, Master Seh Bari rejects the argument of wahdat al-wujud, which explains the manifestation of the world, because he is dedicated to asserting the transcendence of God. He also holds that the existence of a perfect man united with God is due to God's great will.

6 Ethical Sufism

As mentioned at the beginning of this text, the purpose of the author is to impart instruction to his friends on the meaning of the principles of suluk. Drewes translated suluk as "mysticism." If we understand suluk as "spiritual path to God," the author has to explain what that way is. The only reference is in the following passage.

> *E Rijal mitraningsun kabeh, den-sami amiarsaa ing tuturingsun iki; kalayan sapisan ingsun lumampah ing ara-ara iman, sun-tingali tindakingsun ika; sarta lan idining sih nugrahaning Pangeran, sasampun ingsun lumampah ing ara-ara iman, tumindak ingsun ing ara-ara tohid, ya ta sun-tingali tindakingsun ika tan katon, kang katingalan deningsun ika kaananing Allah, kewala; sasampun ingsun lumampah ing ara-ara tohid, lumampah ingsun ing ara-ara maʿrifa, norana kaananingsun, tingalingsung kang maring Pangeran pon nora ana, tĕgĕse iku dening sampun anunggal tingal, dadi nir tingalingsun ika, ing tingal tunggal, kang tiningalan kang sadya andulu dinulu ing pandulunira*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 74–75)
>
> Men! All my friends! Listen to my words. As I entered the field of faith (*iman*), by nature of God's mercy and grace I could see my own doings. After I entered the field of faith, I proceeded to the field of *tawḥīd* (*tohid*),[17] then I did not see my own doings, what I saw was only the existence of God. After I entered the field of *tohid*, I proceeded to the field of intuitive knowledge (*maʿrifa*). There my existence did not exist, I also

17 *Tawḥīd* is the act of believing and affirming that God is one and unique, in a word: monotheism. For the Muslim, it is believing and affirming what is stated by the first article of the Muslim profession of faith: "there is no other god but God" (*lā ilāha illāʾllāh*). See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, *s.v.* "Tawḥīd," accessed May 28, 2022.

> did not see God, that means that because the vision had merged, my own sight vanished into the one and only sight, and what was seen was He who is the eternal subject and object of His own sight.

Seh Bari explains the successive steps such as *imān*, *tawḥīd*, and *maʿrifa*. Several times in other parts of the text he describes the differences among these three levels by deliberately using various expressions, even though he only instructs on the progress to the goal and does not explain the methods. The third level, *maʿrifa*, is commonly translated as "knowledge or cognition,"[18] but its meaning is not discussed here. Instead, this process of development is explained in close connection with the understanding of God's transcendence. This text can be said to lead to the entrance to, but not cross the threshold into, the field of mysticism.

In the latter part of the text, Seh Bari stresses the ethical teachings and basic obligations of a Muslim, that is, five ritual prayers (*salat limang waktu*) and charity (*sidekah*) (Drewes 1969: 90–93). Pupils are taught to concentrate on God and keep away from worldly pleasures and extravagances of food, dress and sleep.

> *Mangka akĕcap Shekhul Bari, kang sinampurnakakĕn iman tohide maʾrifate, dening Allah taʾala, e mintraningsun, den-sami awas sira ing Pangeranira, den-sami angestokĕna kalawan sira anglaranana sarira, tĕgĕsing anglarani sarira iku, aja sira suka-suka awakira, kalawan ta aja mamaesi pangan panganggenira, turunira ing dunya, atinira aja madhĕp ing lyan, balikan sira asukan-sukana, akalangĕna lan Pangeran*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 41–42)

> Meanwhile, Seh Bari whose faith, *tawḥīd*, and *maʿrifa* are perfected by God said: "My friends, you should be alert to God, obey His commandments and hurt your body, which means that you should not indulge in worldly pleasures nor in extravagances of food, dress and sleep. Turn your hearts to God alone and seek your pleasures and delight with Him."

In the end, Seh Bari admonishes his pupil for a lack of sincerity and teaches that outward piety, ascetic life, great learning, or even a high position, is of no value if one lacks sincerity of heart.

18 *Maʿrifa* means knowledge, cognition, … which enables a person to recognize, to identify a thing. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, *s.v.* "Maʿrifa," accessed May 28, 2022.

E mitraningsun ora sun-kalĕwihakĕn ing wong atapa kang kaliwat sangĕte kasutapane, dereng ta ikĕlas atine. .....

E mitraningsun ora sun-kalĕwihakĕn wong kang andrĕbeni kapandhitan, na, lan kawruh kang abĕnĕr, dereng ta ikĕlas atine. .....

E Rijal, mitraningsun ora sun-kalĕwihakĕn wong kang andrĕbeni bangsa kang kaliwat[19] *luhure, ingkang andrĕbeni kagungan kang kaliwat gunge, dereng ta ikĕlas atine*. (Cod. Or. 1928: 75–78)

My friend! I have no respect for ascetics, who are given to severe austerities but lack sincerity of heart.

My friend! I have no respect for people who possess learning and great knowledge but lack sincerity of heart.

My friend! I have no respect for high-born people who are held in the highest esteem but lack sincerity of heart. (Drewes 1969: 97–99)

7 Theoretical Controversies of Sufism in Aceh

In Southeast Asia, the Sufi doctrine of Ibn al-ʿArabī was famously embraced by Hamzah Fansuri, the sixteenth-century Sumatran Sufi poet,[20] and the first writer known to articulate mystical pantheistic ideas in the Malay language. He was a prolific writer who composed many poems (*syair*) praising Ibn al-ʿArabī's philosophy. His works enjoyed popularity, especially in the Aceh royal palace, in the early seventeenth century, the heyday of the Aceh Darussalam kingdom ruled by Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–36). However, this popular poet was severely criticized as heretical and his books were burned by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranirī, an Islamic scholar from Gujarat, India, who served the sultans of Aceh (1637–44) as jurisconsult and later as *shaykh al-Islām* (the highest-ranking religious office). Al-Ranirī was a partisan of the anti-*wujūdiyya* movement which denied the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud (Al-Attas 1962: 36) and criticized Hamzah's belief as pantheistic in the sense that he believed God's essence is completely immanent in the world and that God permeates

19 Drewes omitted "*luhure, ingkang andrĕbeni kagungan kang kaliwat*" which follows this "*kaliwat*" (Or 1928: 75–78).

20 "The date of his death has once again become a subject of debate, since Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, in contrast to earlier scholars, dated it to 933/1527, on the basis of a funeral stele in Mecca, which they identify as Hamzah's. Nevertheless, given the weight of current scholarship, the date 998/1590 or a short time later, suggested by Gerardus Drewes, seems more probable." (Braginsky 2001; see also *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Three, *s.v.* "Fansuri, Hamzah," accessed May 28, 2022).

everything that is seen (Al-Attas 1970: 31). This anti-wujūdiyya movement flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century in India. It was influenced by the Naqshbandiyya,[21] under the reign of the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–57), but the Wujūdiyya succeeded in gaining popularity again in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Therefore, "Raniri's action was a reflex of the internal discord among the Indian Muslim themselves on the subject of the compatibility of the doctrine of Ibn al-ʾArabī with orthodox Islam" (Drewes 1986: 16).

This seventeenth-century religious debate on wahdat al-wujud in Aceh is very famous in the history of Indonesia. Curiously enough, *The Admonitions of Seh Bari* indicates that the controversies concerning wahdat al-wujud already existed in Java in the sixteenth century at the latest, when Hamzah Fansuri was active in Sumatra and the influence of the Wujūdiyya doctrine was enormous, especially during the rule of Akbar the Great (1542–1605) in the Mughal Empire. How should we evaluate the Indian influence? Did the author only translate the foreign polemics of Sufi mysticism into the Javanese language, or did he resist the new ideas from abroad and was it his intention to protect his own philosophy? It should be noted that we can already find theoretical discussions of Sufism in sixteenth-century Javanese texts, even though Java experienced Islamization in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, much later than Aceh, where the first Islamic kingdom was established in the late thirteenth century.

The text originates from the north coast area (pasisir) of Java, where many emerging Islamic port-polities flourished at that time. The author could have been of foreign origin, as Ricklefs argues that on the north coast the Javanization of foreign Muslims and the Islamization of Javanese was underway (Ricklefs 2006: 15–29). We do indeed find some vocabulary from the Malay language, but the author describes the structure of the universe using various Javanese expressions, including in Old Javanese. He did not merely translate items of Arabic origin, because he uses examples of daily commodities used in Javanese society, such as *tumbak* (spear), *dhuhung* (*keris*/ceremonial dagger), *tatah* (chisel), *wadung* (hatchet), *panyukur* (blade for shaving), *usu* (a bow-shaped tool for cleaning cotton), *cacathut* (pincers) and *ĕdom kadut*

21 The Naqshbandiyya Sufi order obecame influential in Indo-Muslim life. ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq of Dihli (d. 1642), a Naqshbandi saint in India, rejected wahdat al-wujud and propounded the theory of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (oneness of witnessing, a doctrine asserted by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), an Indian divine and mystic who claimed Allah's supremacy. He argued that Allah and His creation are not one, and that man can only "witness" Allah and experience oneness with Him in the mystical path). See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, *svv*. "Waḥdat al-Shuhūd" and "Nakshbandiyya," accessed May 28, 2022.

(sacking needle). He is harshly critical of Ibn al-ʿArabī's philosophy, but the rich description shows a deep understanding of it.

His expression of the Essence of the God as liwung also makes us imagine a pantheistic philosophical leaning. In any case, this literature provides us with an opportunity to reconsider Javanese religion in the sixteenth century. It is often thought that advanced Islamic knowledge was not brought to Java until after it arrived on Sumatra and in the Malay Peninsula, but the flow of knowledge may have been faster, or taken a different direction than what has been assumed.

Furthermore, this text of Sunan Bonang repeatedly emphasizes the transcendence of God and strongly criticizes the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud. Regarding union with God, only the three stages for approaching God are indicated, but the methods are not explained in the text. The last part of the text is characterized by the teaching of ethical Sufism which teaches the fulfillment of the basic obligations of Islam, which are only to be performed during the first stage. Perhaps that is what the author means by suluk in the first place. According to Seh Bari, after all, the final stage can never be achieved by human will. Considering the three axes of Sufism described by Tonaga (2005), namely mysticism, ethics, and popular veneration, the content preached by this text can be classified in the category that gives prominence to the ethical aspect.

In addition, given the significance of the text's claim of attribution to the "legitimate" wali, Sunan Bonang, who gave religious authority to Javanese kings and punished heretical walis, it is quite possible to assume that this type of ethical Sufism may have been a leading faction at the time, or was considered important.

8 The Meaning of Heresy

As we have seen, the admonitions as to what kinds of understandings make one an infidel are regularly repeated in the text. The names of "wrong" persons or teachings are repeated in order to mark the contrast with the right ones. The same holds for another surviving sixteenth-century Javan manuscript, also published by Drewes in 1954, under the title *Een Javaanse Primbon uit de Zestiende Eeuw* ("A Javanese Primbon from the Sixteenth Century").[22] This

22 We can find identical contents in text II in Or. 10.811, published by Drewes (1978) under the title of *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethics*. Drewes assumes that the date of compilation of this manuscript can be fixed in the 17th century at the earliest based on "internal evidence" (Drewes 1978: vii).

text focuses on what true believers and Sufis should do, while its teachings are more basic and more of a moral nature. However, here also the differences between Muslim and infidel/hypocrite (*munafik*) are emphasized repeatedly.

The author of "The Admonitions of Seh Bari" makes an effort to analyze God's transcendence precisely because he is aware of the existence of "heretical" teachings. The subtleties offered help us to imagine how difficult this discussion must have been for religious intellectuals in the sixteenth century. It is plausible that the same debate created the literature that has as its theme the heresy of people like the wali Siti Jenar, who proclaimed himself one with God. On the other hand, we can find the following sentences in the *Suluk Malang-sumirang*, a text which was allegedly written by the "heretical" Sunan Panggung who was burnt at the stake, on the orders of the King of Demak.

> *Dosa'gung alit tan dèn singgahi, ujar kupur kapir kang dèn ambah, wus liwung pasikĕpane, tan andulu-dinulu, tan angrasa tan angrasani, wus tan ana pinaran, pan jatining suwung, ing suwunge iku ana, ing anane iku surasa sajati, wus tan ana rinasan.*[23] (Poerbatjaraka 1952: 100)

> If you avoid neither big nor small crimes, and if you follow the words of infidels, it shows your empty body.[24] You do not see and are not seen, do not feel and do not understand. You are without direction because the essence is empty and in the emptiness is the existence. In the existence there are the real meanings. Already there is nothing to be felt.

> *Pangrunguningsun duk rare cili, nora Sĕlam dening asĕmbahyang tan Sĕlam dening pangangge, tan Sĕlam dening saum, nora Sĕlam dening nastiti, tan Sĕlam dening tapa, nora dening laku, tan Sĕlam dening aksara nora Sĕlam yèn anut aksara iki, tininggal nora ĕsah.*
>
> *Sĕlame ika kadi punĕndi, kang ingaranan Sĕlam punika, dening punapa Sĕlame, pan ing wong kapir iku, nora dening amangan bawi, yadyan asĕmbahyanga, yèn durung awĕruh, ing sajatine wong Sĕlam, midĕra anglikasan amontang-manting, jatine kapir kawak.* (Poerbatjaraka 1952: 101)

> I often heard when I was a child, that one is not a Muslim because of prayer or because of clothing, fasting, thriftiness, austerities, behavior, this script or that script, but that not adhering to these things was illegal.

23 *Risasan* in the book.

24 Here I translate *pasikĕpan* as "body," but this word can be translated as "attitude."

> What is Islam like? How does something called Islam become Islam? Eating pork does not make one an unbeliever. If you pray without knowing the truth of being Muslim, even if you go around like a spinning spool, actually you will be always an outdated infidel.

This plea that one must follow each teaching of Islam, but even if one follows them, if it is only in form and if one does not understand the true meaning, one will remain an infidel in the end, shows the dilemma of Javanese Muslims who continue to search for true answers.

Although Pigeaud explains that in the *Pasisir* literature "the mystic and the legalistic orthodox currents existed side by side" (Pigeaud 1967, 1: 78–81), the sixteenth-century text discussed in this chapter shows that the various controversies surrounding Sufism had already entered Java (at least among the Islamic scholars), where Islam had only begun to spread its influence, while the author, who claims to be "orthodox" in the name of Ghazālī and Sunan Bonang, insisted on the transcendence of God and emphasized ethics. The harshness of the criticisms against the wahdat al-wujud philosophy makes us imagine that there were certainly people who supported the philosophy.

In this chapter, in response to the frequently used historical explanation that the influx of Sufism facilitated the Islamization of Java, I have attempted to clarify the nature of Sufism in Java in the sixteenth century through an analysis of manuscripts from the same period. I believe that it is possible to trace the history of Javanese Sufism by examining the religious discussions of the walis in manuscripts from the seventeenth century onward and comparing them with those of the sixteenthth century, although the number of manuscripts copied in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is small, and the acquisition or date of writing is uncertain. Comparisons with religious debates that developed in South Asia during the same period will also be important to understand the background of the discussions in Java.

It is difficult to understand the history of Islam's spread in Java during the period of Islamic influx in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, by rereading the manuscripts from the perspective of historical changes and interregional comparisons, it will become possible to use the manuscripts for the purpose of writing the history of Islam.

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CHAPTER 6

Situated Prophethood: Reading the *Sĕrat Ambiya* in Nineteenth-Century Java

Ronit Ricci

Abstract

This chapter investigates one of Java's most popular yet little studied textual traditions, the *Sĕrat Ambiya*. These "Tales of the Prophets," which appear in numerous manuscripts inscribed in palaces and villages, in poetry and prose and in various scripts, depict the lives of the many prophets of Islam leading up to Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets. The chapter examines two manuscripts produced in the mid-19th century Javanese *pĕsantren* milieu, focusing on scenes in which, I suggest, the life of an Ambiya figure echoes with that of a Javanese wali. Thus, for example, the episode of nabi Ibrahim constructing the first mosque in Mecca shares much with the well-known story of Sunan Kalijaga's role in the erection of Java's first mosque in Demak. Hence the chapter points to a "wali-Ambiya interface" through which two great Islamic traditions – those of the walis and nabis – were intertwined and mutually constituted in major Javano-Islamic pedagogical settings.

Keywords

prophets – wali – Ambiya – pesantren – wali-Ambiya interface – Javanese literature – Islam

1 Introduction: Tales of the Prophets

The stories of the prophets' lives form a central textual tradition of a global Islamic civilization. Told in many languages, genres, and places, they recount the deeds and sayings of the figures viewed as prophets in Islam, familiar from the Jewish and to a lesser degree Christian traditions. Many of these figures are not considered prophets by these latter religions but nonetheless are

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well known, including Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, Jesus and others.[1] In the Muslim tradition, the stories of the prophets inevitably lead up to the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad, considered the Seal of the Prophets after whom no further true prophets will appear in the world. The biography of Muhammad, from his birth and childhood to his early struggles, failures, and successes in convincing others to follow the path of Islam and his death, as well as stories of his companions and family members, are all typically included in, and form the closing section of, the cycle of tales.

The title *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Ar. "Tales of the Prophets," from *nabī*, pl. *anbiyā'*) was applied to a range of Islamic compositions written in Arabic as well as in Persian. The earliest Arabic versions date to the first or second century of the Islamic era.[2] Regarding the tales' arrival in the Indonesian archipelago some scholars are of the view that an Arabic book entitled *'Umdat al-ansāb* ("Pillar of the Genealogies"), a work written in Aceh but based on a sixteenth-century Persian text concerning the genealogy of the prophet Muhammad, constituted the authority on which the Javanese renditions are based but it is not known when the Javanese tradition first appeared.[3] Versions of the tales are extant in several of the archipelago's languages (above all in Malay, Madurese, Sundanese and Acehnese) and are known also from the repositories of colonial diasporas in Ceylon and South Africa.[4]

Be the precise transmission history as it may, in Java the *Sĕrat* (or *Layang*) *Ambiya*, sometimes spelled *Anbiya* ("Book of the Prophets") corpus contains one of the largest number of different tellings within a single Javanese textual tradition and possess a very complex history.[5] It has enjoyed great popularity, as the lives of the prophets serve as models for the believer and engagement

1 Among the most popular of tales that bring to the fore Jewish traditions which have been adapted within Islam, rather than a strict image of the Jews, are the traditions known in Arabic as *ḥadīth Isrā'īliyyāt*, or Judaica. In his early biography of the Prophet, Ibn Isḥāq (8th c.) drew extensively on this body of stories. One effect of their use by Ibn Isḥāq was to link his *Sīra* and the Qur'an to previous scripture through these stories, fostering the claim that Islam was the heir to Judaism and Christianity. They include narratives regarded as historical, serving to complement the information provided in the scriptures, particularly regarding the prophets; edifying narratives placed within the chronological framework of "the period of the ancient Israelites"; and fables allegedly, and sometimes actually, borrowed from Jewish sources. On the *Isrā'īliyyāt* see, for example, Newby 1989.

2 Milstein et al. 1999: 7; Schussman 1981.

3 Ricklefs 2016, accessed February 7, 2021.

4 For an example from colonial Ceylon, see *Tales of the Prophets and Misc.* https://eap.bl.uk/collection/EAP450-2/search, accessed April 7, 2022.

5 Following A.K. Ramanujan (1991: 24–25), I prefer "tellings" to "versions," the latter a term that implies the existence of an Ur-text.

with such texts was, and is, viewed as bearing rewards, e.g., producing merit that equals that of visiting the Ka'ba or going on pilgrimage to all the prophets' graves. The manuscripts vary greatly in terms of their places of inscription, be it the central Javanese palaces, the Merapi-Merbabu scriptoria, the northern coast of Java (*pasisiran*), or the rural interior and Islamic boarding schools (*pĕsantren*); some are quite brief while others contain hundreds, if not thousands, of pages; they are written in prose and in poetic meters, in the Javanese, Balinese, Buda and *pegon* script and are inscribed on palm leaf and paper, with print versions appearing from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. As an example of their variability, Behrend in his Sonobudoyo Museum catalogue (1990) notes that the Museum possesses 30 Ambiya manuscripts of which no two are identical.[6] Further complicating the picture is the fact that this corpus blends into others at the edges and overlaps to one degree or another with "branch texts" (which are also plentiful and diverse), like those focusing on a particular nabi (*Sĕrat Yusup*), a member of the Prophet's family (*Patimah Sami*), or a particular biographical episode (*Sĕrat Samud*).[7] In the Javanese Ambiya, which likely derive from Arabic and/or Persian sources but are also most likely linked to such tales in other languages of the archipelago, including most prominently Malay, the familiar stories often appear to be set in Java and present their themes through a local filter that teaches much both about Java at the time of compilation and writing, and about consistent elements at the core of the tales.

The Javanese Ambiya texts have been studied by several scholars who for the most part prepared synopses of different tellings, an important step in creating a basis for comparative study and a mapping of the larger corpus.[8] What their studies reveal is that although tellings tend to be different, it is also the case that quite often two or more manuscripts will have entire sections that are the same (as expressed through identical *tĕmbang macapat* metrical sequences and corresponding initial lines of each canto), possibly pointing to a similar production context or a shared source.[9] Information about the texts – their time and place of inscription, primarily – can also be gleaned, to some degree, from manuscript catalogues that map manuscript production across Java (Pigeaud 1967) or in particular sites (e.g., Florida 1993 on Karaton Surakarta; Saktimulya 2005 on Pura Pakualaman; Setyawati et al. 2002 on the

6 These diverse Ambiya manuscripts are described in Behrend 1990: 206–20.

7 See, respectively, Arps 1990; Behrend 1990: 207; Ricci 2011.

8 For example, Brandes 1901: 76–89; Poerbatjaraka et al. 1950: 26–74.

9 Behrend (1990: 207) found an exception to this tendency in two manuscripts from the Central Javanese palaces which did not resemble any others.

Merapi-Merbabu Collection), and from digitized repositories (e.g., the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme).[10] These volumes and websites bear witness to the popularity of the corpus and to its variability.

As Behrend noted in 1990,[11] and this is still true 30 years on, research carried out to date on the Ambiya has been insufficient to allow an in-depth exploration of the corpus' transmission history and its inter-textual and inter-corpora links.

The Ambiya corpus or textual tradition is central to Javanese Islam: to imagining and internalizing a "history of everything": the creation of the world and the early history of humanity; major developments before, leading up to and throughout the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime; his legacy and the history of early Islam. If we explore these texts more closely, they present, in addition to these broad strokes of a particular history, also a model for moral behavior and attitudes in this life, a paradigm of how good Muslim men and women should act, the rituals they should carry out like the five daily prayers or fasting during Ramadan, and the acts they must avoid, like worshipping idols or doubting God's omnipotence. At an even more detailed level – although of course linked to "correct behavior" and sometimes to transgressing it – the texts explore the most fundamental of human relationships, including those between husband and wife, parent and child, siblings, king and subjects, king and prophet, guru and disciple, elders and youth, foreigner and locals, friends and companions. Through these relationships the text also engages with a range of emotional responses and social contexts: episodes depict doubt, fear, anger, jealousy, passion, love, rivalry, courage, kindness, regret, remorse, hope, stubbornness, terror – offering a repository for thinking about what it means to be human in particular cultural contexts.[12]

2 The Ambiya and the Pĕsantren

The context I wish to explore further in this chapter is that of Ambiya production and consumption in Java's pĕsantren milieu. Pĕsantren, nowadays known as "Islamic boarding schools" but possessing a long and under-studied history, were clearly important sites for the cultivation and transmission of Islamic knowledge in nineteenth-century Java.

10 Pigeaud 1967: 130–31; Florida 1993: 65–66, 193; Saktimulya 2005: 128–34; Setyawati et al. 2002: 115, 138, 157, 215.

11 Behrend 1990: 206.

12 For an additional perspective on the affective dimensions of Javanese literature see Arps' contribution to this volume.

I first became curious about the role of Ambiya stories in the pĕsantren when reading a manuscript, to be described below, which made me wonder how such stories were read, recited, taught and discussed at pĕsantren, or other, perhaps less formal, educational settings in nineteenth-century Java, and whether such manuscripts found a place among the more theological and legalistic curriculum offered to the students (J. *santri*). It also made me think about the ways the prophets' tales could have been adapted to different circumstances, and how didactic and religious messages, as well as literary elements and folk motifs, could have found their way into the vast, often unruly, and highly popular corpus.

For example, considering popular practices and values like pilgrimage to holy graves, respect towards elders and belief in the supernatural, did these enter the text, and how? What was the relationship between practices, beliefs and attitudes, and these well-known stories? What do we know of the place of Ambiya tales in the nineteenth-century pĕsantren? Was there a space for storytelling more generally? When, how, and by whom were stories told?

Van Bruinessen (1994) discusses the development of pĕsantren on Java, suggesting that the first pĕsantren proper were not established before the eighteenth century. Prior to that, in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, Islamic disciplines were taught at the mosque or court, and masters of mystical-magical sciences were based mainly in hermitages or near sacred graves.[13] The pĕsantren in their later form may have developed in part out of these various locations.[14] Van Bruinessen's focus in his article is on the *kitab kuning*, the so-called "yellow books" in Arabic (with or without translation) studied in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century pĕsantren, which formed the core of the curriculum. Lists of such books are also known from van den Berg's famous 1886 survey of works taught, and from elsewhere.[15] The question of a possible "supplementary" educational element that included reading manuscripts in Javanese that focused on stories as a mode of enhancing an understanding of the Islamic tradition is not raised.

However, there are elements in pĕsantren life as described by van Bruinessen that clearly echo with core themes of the Ambiya corpus: the

13 Van Bruinessen 1994: 11. For another discussion of early forms of Islamic learning and educational settings in the archipelago, see Laffan 2011: 26–27.

14 The inclusion of several Ambiya texts amongst the 16th–18th century Merapi-Merbabu manuscripts offers a tantalizing hint of such earlier sites of learning and textual production, suggesting that at least some Islamic tales were copied and read alongside the older Hindu-Buddhist texts and Old Javanese kakawin poems in these mountain scriptoria. For an introduction to the Merapi-Merbabu collection, see Setyawati et al. 2005: 1–6.

15 The first Dutch observations on the curriculum were documented in 1819, see van der Chijs 1864: 217; Van den Berg 1886.

Prophet is highly venerated and the concept of an unbroken genealogical chain that goes back to him is central. Saints, whose intercession is invoked often, are also venerated and visits to their graves are an essential part of the annual ritual cycle.[16] Islamic religious scholars and teachers (J. *kyai*) and saints (J. *wali*) are believed to retain spiritual powers and an ability to bestow blessings beyond the grave. The belief in *wasila*, spiritual mediation through one's teacher to other teachers and saints, the Prophet and God, is strong. These beliefs in intercession to which death forms no barrier, are found, for example, in the biographies of nabi Daud (David) and nabi Yusuf (Joseph).

Thinking about the pĕsantren in nineteenth-century Java evokes the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, the remarkable and "encyclopediac" Javanese text discussed in the chapters by Florida and by Day in this volume, which depicts, among many other things, the wanderings of several santri across the Javanese social and geographical landscape.[17] Pending an exhaustive search of the text, I am uncertain whether the titles *Layang Ambiya* or *Sĕrat Ambiya* are mentioned in the *Cĕnthini* but it is clear that the tales were told on various occasions. For example, in the Kamajaya edition of the *Cĕnthini*'s first volume, we find a scene stretching over two cantos in which Raden Jayĕngsari speaks of the lives of six prophets, followed by a discussion of Muhammad and his Law (J. *sarengat*). The six (J. *kangjĕng nabi nĕnĕm*) include Adam, Sis (Seth), Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Daud (David), Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus).[18] The word "pĕsantren" does not appear in the *Cĕnthini*, but *paguron* (residence of a teacher) and *padhepokan* (camp, holy man's settlement) do, highlighting the personal nature of study and discipleship that revolved around the relationship to a particular guru.[19] For example, the text narrates how Seh Brahim taught at a paguron in the mountains of Karang,[20] the same place van Bruinessen

16 Van Bruinessen 1994: 4.

17 I thank Tony Day for pointing me to several relevant references mentioned by Pigeaud in his discussion of the *Cĕnthini* (1933). These do not mention the title *Sĕrat Ambiya* with which we are familiar at present, but they indicate that the biographies of a range of Ambiya figures including, for example, the prophets Isa and Yusup and Raja Namrud, served as storytelling material.

18 Kamajaya 1985–1991, 1: 234–37. The six prophets are discussed in canto 65 (in Jurudemung, 230–34) and the Prophet Muhammad in canto 66 (in Maskumambang), https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/serat-centhini/952-centhini-kamajaya-1985-91-761-jilid-01-pupuh-058-073, accessed September 15, 2021. Further research is needed to ascertain the place of the prophets' stories within the *Cĕnthini* and to assess their relationship to the Ambiya tellings originating from pesantren and elsewhere.

19 A scene depicting devotion to two Javanese Islamic gurus by an exilic circle of disciples in colonial Ceylon is depicted in the *Babad Giyanti*, see Ricci 2019: 104–11.

20 Kamajaya 1985, canto 58: 20 (in dhandhanggula).

mentions as the site where Seh Bari is said to have taught doctrines propagated by the nine wali, the saintly men credited with bringing Islam to Java.[21]

This latter example brings me closer to the theme to which I will dedicate the rest of the chapter, what I wish to call a "wali-Ambiya interface." In the absence of ethnographic studies of nineteenth-century pesantren life and a dearth of detailed historical records, the Ambiya texts offer inroads into the pĕsantren thought world and within it, I will suggest, to the ways in which two great Islamic traditions – those of the walis and prophets – were brought into dialogue with one another.[22] Through an exploration of three particular Ambiya episodes I will consider how the biographies of the walis and nabis were linked in the pĕsantren Ambiya tradition, and propose that this process leaves behind dichotomies of "Arab" and "local" Islam, ancient and more recent, "authentic" and "syncretic," and invites the reader or listener of the Ambiya to imagine these canonical figures as belonging to one and the same realm.

3 A "Wali-Ambiya Interface?"

There is textual evidence for links between walis and prophets in genealogical accounts that explicitly view the walis as descendants of the prophets as well as in accounts that relate the biographies of the prophets, then move on seamlessly to those of the walis on Java.[23] These instances point to significant ties between the two groups, the earlier prophets being viewed as the biological ancestors of the walis or as their cultural and religious antecedents. Presently I wish to examine a different kind of link or overlap, one that is not sequential but rather involves the biographies themselves, which, as I demonstrate here, combine elements known from the lives of the walis with those of prophets.

21 Van Bruinessen 1994: 10–11. In present day tellings of the walis' lives, several of them, e.g., Sunan Giri and Sunan Drajat, are said to have founded pĕsantren of their own, while major figures in the history of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the movement whose members, across hundreds of pĕsantren, continue to endorse the wali traditions, are depicted as the direct heirs to the walis. Thus, the life and deeds of NU founder KH. Hasyim Asy'ari appear immediately after those of the nine walis and Siti Jĕnar (the latter is included amongst the walis but denounced as Shia), see Rahimsyah 1997: 224–62.

22 It is not my intention to claim that findings and insights presented here are uniquely tied to Ambiya composed and inscribed in the pĕsantren milieu. Making such a claim, if at all, will require in-depth study of palace (and other) Ambiya manuscripts and a careful comparison amongst tellings produced in different contexts.

23 See, for example the early 19th c. *Punika sĕrat sĕjarah Rasulullah Muhammat* (MS. BL IOL Jav 12, 218–38), which includes a genealogy (J. *sĕjarah*) that stretches from the Prophet via his daughter Patima and grandson Kusen and several others to Sunan Giri.

The recent case of former Indonesian President and Nahdlatul Ulama leader Abdurrahman Wahid (known as Gus Dur), viewed by many of his followers as the tenth wali who is also identified with nabi Kilir (Ar. al-Khiḍr), may provide a contemporary example of this phenomenon, the deeper history of which I wish to mine.[24] However, although I set out thinking about the specific wali-prophet connection, I realized the tendency I highlight is not limited to prophets. Rather, it appears that elements from the walis' biographies were entwined with those of important figures in the Ambiya tradition, be they a prophet, a king or a Companion (J. *sahabat*), thus blurring the lines between the well-known episodes of the nine walis (J. *wali sanga*) credited with introducing Islam to Java and propagating it there and the telling of earlier Islamic history.[25] Therefore the term "wali-Ambiya interface" is more appropriate than "wali-nabi interface," as it relates to links between the walis' life narratives and those of a range of figures populating the Ambiya corpus. The links are never drawn explicitly. Rather, the biographical similarities, I suggest, create echoes that reverberate within the collective memory of Javanese Muslims listening to the tales. The Ambiya characters and the walis do not fully mesh with one another: they continue to exist, concurrently, in both separate and shared realms of piety, learning, personal conduct, and storytelling.

In this study I examine these recurring life-motifs as they appear in two Javanese manuscripts from the nineteenth-century pĕsantren milieu. The first is *Layang Ambiya*, MS. MSB L12 from the Museum Sonobudoyo collection in Yogyakarta. The manuscript was inscribed in 1772 AJ/1844 CE by kyai Ahmad Ngali. Like almost all nineteeth-century texts discussed in this volume it, too, was composed in tĕmbang macapat and it encompasses 71 cantos written across 560 pages in the pegon script. The manuscript is missing its conclusion. There are canto (J. *pupuh*) and stanza (J. *pada* or *bait*) markers in red, green, and gold throughout the manuscript and every division of the stanza (J. *gatra*) is marked with the Arabic letter *ṭā'* (ط). The manuscript contains many colorful illustrations that relate to the tales, portraying human, animal, and *wayang*-like figures (see figure 6.1).[26]

24 For an analysis of this phenomenon, see Quinn 2018.

25 In a tentative way, I would suggest this to be a gendered phenomenon. Both groups are male (and although there are also instances of female sainthood in Java, as I learned from George Quinn, and significant female figures appear in the Ambiya (e.g. Dewi Maryam, Dewi Aminah) we do not find the title "prophetess" bestowed on any of them). As far as I know, there are no female prophetesses in Islam and there is no feminine equivalent of nabī in Arabic.

26 The title appears as *Sĕrat Ambiya* in the catalogue but as *Layang Ambiya* in the manuscript (canto 1, stanza 13). For information about the manuscript, see Behrend 1990:

FIGURE 6.1 Nabi Nuh (Noah) and his three sons on the ark. *Layang Ambiya*, Museum Sonobudoyo, Yogyakarta, MS. MSB L12, f. 50v
MUSEUM SONOBUDOYO, YOGYAKARTA

FIGURE 6.2 The opening page of *Cerito Ambiya*
BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON, EAP061/1/95, HTTPS://EAP.BL.UK/ARCHIVE-FILE/EAP061-1-95

The second manuscript, *Cerito Ambiya*, now digitized as part of the project "Digitizing Islamic manuscripts of Indonesian Pondok Pesantren," is from the collection of Pesantren Langitan in Tuban.[27] Its call number in the digital collection is EAP061/1/95. Like MSB L12, this manuscript too is written in pegon and composed in tĕmbang macapat. The two manuscripts, however, differ significantly in their physical form: MSB L12 includes an unusual array of illuminations and illustrations while EAP061/1/95 is much plainer, with a red frame on its opening page and red marks signaling the divisions between lines in each stanza and the stanza's end (see figure 6.2). Cantos are marked with slightly larger letters than the rest of the text in black and red, accompanied by flowers or leaves drawn in red.

Although due to these characteristics the two *Ambiya* seem very different to one skimming through them, in fact a detailed comparison of their tĕmbang sequence, initial canto lines, language style and content reveals that they are remarkably similar: of the 71 cantos in MSB L12, 59 correspond in terms of sequence and initial line with EAP061/1/95 and an additional canto, the first in both manuscripts, corresponds in its poetic meter, bringing the overlap to over 80%.[28] In the following pages I examine three episodes that appear in both manuscripts.

4 A Tale of Two Mosques

The first example of a wali-Ambiya interface is found in MSB L12, canto 16: 9–14 and EAP061/1/95, canto 14: 8–13, both of which are composed in the dhandhanggula meter and present the story in an almost identical manner.[29] After the episode of nearly sacrificing his son Isma'il to God and events in Sodom with Lot and the infidels, Ibrahim returns home and tells his sons Isma'il and Ishaq (Isaac) that he received three boons (J. *anugĕrah*) from God: the epithet "beloved of God" (Ar. *khalīl allāh*; J. *mitĕra Yang Widi*), a book (J. *kitab*), and a commandment to spread the faith. In light of the latter, he wishes to build a mosque in Mecca. As he goes about preparing for this task and gathering the

208–209. For a brief study of this manuscript and a selection of translated verses, see Ricci 2021.

27 "Digitizing Islamic Manuscripts of Indonesian Pondok Pesantren," funded by the British Library's Endangered Archive Programme (EAP061), comprises 315 items. See: https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP061, accessed September 2021.

28 The corresponding cantos are: L12 4–17 and EAP 2–15; L12 20–24 and EAP 19–23; L12 26–28 and EAP 24–26; L12 34–52 and EAP 31–49; L12 54–71 (end) and EAP 50–67.

29 I refrain here from mentioning differences between the two manuscripts as they are very minor.

necessary components, he finds that one pillar for the structure is missing. He searches for a big slab of stone but cannot find one. Then he meets a man who has such a slab in his possession, but the man refuses to give or even to sell it to Ibrahim. Ibrahim turns to God and following this plea, the man has a dream in which a very old man appears, telling him to quickly give the stone to Ibrahim lest he meet misfortune in this world and the next. If, on the other hand, he offers the stone to Ibrahim, he will be rewarded in both worlds and enter paradise. Here are a few lines from MSB L12 (canto 16: 12) depicting this moment, with the corresponding, and very similar lines from EAP061/1/95 (canto 14: 11) placed in the footnote, a practice I will follow also in subsequent quotes from the two manuscripts:[30]

12. *ana 'ucap wong wus kaki2/*	There was an elderly man who then spoke/
eh ki putu sela dika wehna/	Hey there grandson do hand over the stone/
marang jĕng nabi den age/	to nabi Ibrahim at once/
yen tan suka sireku/	If you don't deliver it/
tĕmah sira nĕmu bilahi/	you shall encounter disaster yes/
ing dunya ingakirat/	in this world and in the next/
balik yen ta asung/	But if you do grant it/
pĕsthi oleh kabĕcikan/	surely due to your doing good/
dunya kerat suwarga kang sira panggih/	in this world and the next you will encounter bliss/
anglilir nulya kesah//	Upon waking off he went//

The stone-owner wakes up, finds Ibrahim and tells him he is entrusting the stone to him for the building of the mosque. Nabi Ibrahim accepts it, expressing the hope that the man will be rewarded by God for his assistance. The Masjid al-Harām in Mecca is then erected, many come to pray there and are led by nabi Ibrahim as imam.[31]

30 *Ana ngucap wong wus kaki2/ eh ki putu sela winehana/marang nabi Ibrahim age/yen sira nora suka/ tĕmah sira nĕmu bilahi/ing dungnya lan ing kerat/balik yen sira asung/masthi aleh ing suwarga/dungnya kerat kabĕcikan kang sira panggih/sapanglilirnya kesah//*. I have followed Nancy Florida's example of keeping the syllable count of the Javanese tĕmbang in the translation.

31 To date I have not come across a tradition about nabi Ibrahim lacking a pillar at the time he erected the Masjid al-Harām. The building of the mosque by Ibrahim is mentioned, albeit from a different perspective, in Meyer's discussion of the *Seh Mlaya* in which nabi Kilir mentions Ibrahim's old mosque to explain to Sunan Kalijaga that the real Mecca is not at the site of those old rocks but is an inner spiritual journey.

This depiction recalls the story of the founding of the mosque in Demak, Java's first Islamic kingdom situated on the north coast, in the fifteenth century. As the story goes, a day before the mosque was completed, one of the main four pillars was still missing. Sunan Kalijaga, most renowned of the nine walis, collected bits of wood and was able, through his deep meditation, to miraculously connect them together so that they became a large, heavy, stable pillar without which the mosque could not be completed.[32]

Nabi Ibrahim, in Mecca, is the progenitor of all Muslims, father of Isma'il from whose line the Prophet would be born. Both he and Sunan Kalijaga are major father figures: Ibrahim for the entire Muslim *umma* and Sunan Kalijaga for Javanese Muslims, and the two structures they erected were to be foundational mosques in different corners of the Muslim world. The mosques in Mecca and Demak are connected through this episode, as they are linked through additional stories, including the one about orienting them towards one another, and there are also stories of connections made more broadly between the Holy Cities and Java, as in reports of Sultan Agung's weekly Friday visits to the Prophet's mosque and the many handfuls of Mecca's earth that he brought home in the seventeenth century to create the royal burial mound at Imogiri, depicted in the *Nitik* texts discussed by Bogaerts in her chapter. In this way, the analogous stories of Ibrahim and Kalijaga connect for the Ambiya audience not only the men's biographies but also their proselytizing efforts, the two mosques, and Java with Arabia. The pillar, indispensable to the building of the mosque, is a central component that connects all the parts into a single whole and allows the mosque to stand, steady and constant, for many centuries, and to remain a focal point for the Muslim community. The solution to the missing pillars is obtained in a supernatural manner, pointing to divine intervention and guidance at the creation moment of the mosques and the new Muslim communities.

5 Signs of the Divine

The second wali-Ambiya interface example I present appears in MSB L12 canto 47: 1–10 and EAP061/1/95 canto 44: 1–10, both composed in megatruh and, as in the case discussed above, almost identical in their wording. Here we find the episode of the Israelites' desire to be ruled by a king of their own. They

32 For a translation of this scene as it appears in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir* and for its analysis as part of the founding of the Demak Mosque episode, see Florida 1995: 162–64 and 319–32, respectively.

turn to nabi Ismawil[33] (Samuel) asking who shall rule over them and express the wish that it will be Ismawil himself, but he replies that the role will be filled by Thalut (the biblical Saul). The people (J. *qaum*) are appalled by the idea, claiming that Thalut is but a lowly, very poor tanner, and therefor unfit for kingship. Ismawil then retorts that he has been given a sign by God that will allow him to know who is the one destined to rule: the person who will be the first to see the Ark (J. *pěthi tabut*). The people go quickly into the mountains and forests, searching, but Thalut is the one who encounters the Ark, which glows like the moon descending on a mountaintop. The Ark is brought before Ismawil who tells the people to open it. They all try to do so in turn, but none is able to open the pěthi except for Thalut.[34]

Once it has been opened all those present see its contents: the royal regalia (J. *upacaraning kapěrabon*) including (or consisting of) a garment. The people try it on but, once again, no one succeeds as it is too tight-fitting for all, until Thalut dons it and it fits perfectly, and he becomes king.[35]

Dening ngagěm busana ing para qaum/	The royal garment was donned by each person there/
sědaya sěsak pěrasami/	T'was exceedingly tight for all/
nulya wahu pun Thalut/	However for that man Thalut/
busana sěděng rěspati/	the garment was just right it seems/
lěstari juměněng katong//	bringing the fortune of kingship//

Here we find the biography not of a prophet (as in the case of Ibrahim) but of a king linked to that of a wali, and once again that wali is Sunan Kalijaga. The story of the sign sent by God to indicate that Thalut is destined to be king echoes with that of Sunan Kalijaga as told in the *Sěrat Wali Sana*, *Babad Pajajaran* and *Babad Demak*. These texts offer somewhat different tellings of

33 In EAP061/1/95 this prophet is called Isma'il (the name of Ibrahim's son) but it is clearly referring to a different person.

34 There are many instances in the *Layang Ambiya* in which different boxes, containers and chests play an important role, but this is a topic for another study.

35 MSB L12 canto 47: 10. The corresponding verse in EAP061/1/95 is: *Nulya denanggo busana ing para qaum/sadaya sěsěk pěrsami/nulya dhatěng Thalut/ busana nira raspati/lastari juměněng katong* (canto 44: 10).

The story of Thalut becoming king is mentioned only briefly in the Qur'an, in Sūrat al-Baqara 2: 247–51, where the Israelites resist the idea because they do not believe he is fit and the Ark appears (brought by an angel) as a divine sign that God has chosen Thalut as ruler, but none of the other details mentioned above appear there.

the episode and I base myself here on a published 1914 *Babad Demak* which offers the most detail.[36] After a long argument amongst the walis over the true *kiblat* (from A. *qibla*, orientation towards Mecca for prayer) and the reorienting of the mosques in Mecca and in Demak towards one another, the walis were having a discussion at the Demak mosque when they saw a parcel wrapped in sheepskin hanging from above. With his staff Sunan Bonang was able to pick at it and it dropped down. Upon opening the parcel two items were found inside the sheepskin: a letter and a beautiful vest (J. *kotang*). The letter was from God's chosen Prophet, telling Sunan Kalijaga (here, as in the scenes discussed by Meyer in her chapter, referred to as Seh Mlaya) that Muhammad was rewarding him with his own garment (J. *lorodan*, an item handed down from one of higher status) known as Antakusuma, that he should wear in this world and the next, succeeding him, the Prophet (J. *gĕnten ingsun*).[37] And further, the letter commanded, Sunan Kalijaga should make the sheepskin into a garment that will bring great benefits in the future, serving as the kingdom's talisman and magically fulfilling wishes when donned, for all generations thereafter.

Sunan Bonang then tells Sunan Kalijaga to wear Antakusuma so that he can discern its true color. When he does so, the vest glows like a lightning bolt, and when the walis are asked to report on the nature of its color their views differed and there was no agreement. Finally, following Sunan Bonang's instructions, the heavenly sheepskin is sewn into a garment and given the name Kyai Gondhil. In the section of the story that most recalls that of Thalut, the walis, one by one, attempt to wear the newly made garment: first is Sunan Bonang who finds it exceedingly tight, then Sunan Giri for whose build it was clearly inadequate, followed by Sunan Ngudung for whom, too, it was ill fitted. The other walis in turn hope to succeed, but to no avail. Kyai Gondhil was either too loose or too tight for all until Sunan Kalijaga donned it and it fit him perfectly.[38] Sunan Bonang, understanding this "garment-test" as a sign from above, speaks:[39]

36 *Babad Demak*, canto 8: 3–17 in pangkur. https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/babad/220-babad-demak-de-bra-dewabrata-1914-1295, accessed June 10, 2021.

37 This phrase seems to correspond to Arabic *khalīfa*: successor, ruler, leader, viceroy.

38 Like the box/treasure chest mentioned above, the "right fit" is also a popular folk motif across cultures, e.g., in the Goldilocks tale. This opens up the question of the embeddedness of such folk motifs in biblical and Qur'anic stories.

39 *Babad Demak*, canto 8: 16.

Sunan Benang angandika/	Sunan Benang pronounced these words:/
wus pinasthi sinihan mring Hyang Widhi/	destined as beloved of the All Ruling/
Ki Jĕbeng Kali pinunjul/	this youth Kali is superior/
mring samining oliya/	to each and every wali/
pratandhane tan owah ganjaranipun/	signaled by God's immutable rewards to him/
pinasthi ing tanah Jawa/	Destiny is that in Java/
jĕbeng Kali kang ngimani//	young Kali will instill the faith//

The analogy suggested here is between two figures, a wali and a king, who were chosen to lead in extraordinary and perhaps unlikely circumstances: Thalut, the poor man of humble background whom God determined would be the first king of Israel, and Seh Mlaya, the former robber, whom the Prophet appointed as his heir on earth on a tropical island far from the traditional centers of Islam. In both cases a sign was sent from the heavens to provide a concrete manifestation of the role bestowed upon these figures, and in both instances that initial sign (the appearance of the Ark, and of the bundle) was insufficient to persuade the doubtful. Thus the first sign was followed by a second, definitive test involving extraordinary garments: the royal heirloom (J. *pusaka*) for Thalut and the heavenly sheepskin-turned-garment for Kalijaga, with both seemingly custom-made for the predestined ones and ill-fitted for anyone else who donned them.[40] Whereas the tale of the building of the mosque by Ibrahim and Sunan Kalijaga spoke to the importance of erecting a physical site of worship for emerging Muslim communities and to the mosque's enduring centrality as a "pillar" of Muslim spiritual and ritual life, the Thalut and Kalijaga episodes emphasized for their audiences issues of lineage and legitimacy, political and religious leadership and the themes of divine tests, boons and approval. The next instance addresses a context that is more fraught than the previous two and shows how intricate the wali-Ambiya interface was.

40 Humor is culture and period-bound. I wonder if there is humor intended in the depiction of the Israelites, and the walis, trying to squeeze into an item of clothing that is far too small? Or putting it on and having it hang loose and look ridiculous? There is no explicit indication in the text that this was so.

6 Off with Your Head?

My third and final example appears in MSB L12 canto 65: 16–25 and EAP061/1/95 canto 61: 17–26, both composed in kinanthi and, once again, almost identical in their wording. In this episode the Prophet Muhammad emerges from the Thawr cave where he had taken refuge from the foes pursuing him and walks to Medina, flanked by his companions, and protected by a white cloud from above. Along the road and especially when he arrives at his home and later the mosque, many greet him and join his followers, accepting Islam and reciting the Qur'an together. Then, in a manner similar to that described by Day as the poet's "zooming in" on the masses in a *Cĕnthini* scene, the text shifts from the description of the large crowd to focus on a particular micro-scene within it, that of a dialogue between two men: the Prophet's companion Shahid Jabar and the infidel king Raja Rajazi.[41] The king turns to the companion and warns him, on pain of death, not to preach the faith to the multitudes as he believes following the Prophet is destroying the ways of old. Then, as if despite his harsh words there is some doubt in his heart, he asks Shahid Jabar who was the one who had advised him that Muhammad was indeed a prophet. Shahid Jabar replies that he learned from his scripture (J. *kitab amba*) that whoever follows Muhammad will enter paradise and whoever does not will be doomed to hell. He then offers to instruct the king, saying it would be a pity were the king not to gain a favorable afterlife. The king snarls at Shahid Jabar, then sings a song (J. *gĕndhing*) as the gamelan has gathered and its music plays soft and sweet (J. *ngĕrangin*). As Shahid Jabar hears the music his eyes fill with tears, and the king asks why he is so upset. Shahid explains the music is *haram*, forbidden by the Prophet. At this the king draws his sword and Shahid Jabar laughs. The king, bewildered, wonders why he is laughing, and strikes him down. Then:[42]

41 This is the name as it appears in EAP061/1/95, while in MSB L12 the name is spelled Rĕzaji.

42 MSB L12 canto 65: 24–25. The first line has an extra syllable while the second is missing two. The corresponding verse in EAP061/1/95 is canto 61: 25–26. *Maca ini wahjatu/rahiya pĕthak kandanya mirek/raja Rajazi 'andika/akeh wong kang sun pateni/nora kaya shahid jabar/sirahing tinigas nuli// Angling payanama tuwalu/pashima wajahu Allahi/* The first line is missing a syllable; the second line has two extra syllables. The penultimate line has an extra syllable.

maca ini wajahtu rahi/	Reciting *wajahtu* then blood/
pĕthak gonda wangi/	white of fragrant smell it was/
raja Rĕraji ʿandika/	raja Rĕraji thus announced/
akeh wong kang sun pateni/	many a man have I destroyed/
nora kaya Shahid Jabar/	but none were like Shahid Jabar/
sirahe tinigas nuli//	His head severed from body then//
Angling paenama tawalu/	spoke *paenama tawalu/*
pasama wajhatullahi/	*pasama wajhatullahi/*

When the king strikes Shahid Jabar with his sword, his head rolls to the ground yet his mouth continues speaking as white blood of sweet fragrance appears, and he utters the Qur'anic verse "wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah" (Sūrat al-Baqara 2: 115).[43] The king is amazed, articulating out loud that which had just transpired before his eyes, stating that although he had killed many a person none were like Shahid Jabar, able to recite verses and attest to God's all-pervading presence even when his head had been severed from his body.

This episode, appearing towards the end of the Ambiya manuscripts, recalls the trial and execution of Siti Jĕnar, the most controversial of Javanese walis, who was sentenced to death by the council of walis for teaching secret truths about the Unity of Being to the uninitiated. When Siti Jĕnar was struck by Sunan Kalijaga (or, in some tellings, by Sunan Kudus), as Shahid Jabar was struck by the king, his head too rolled to the ground but continued speaking and laughing, ridiculing the walis and their limited, rigid view of devotion and piety. There are multiple tellings of this widely known episode, in which the walis try to curb, once and for all, Siti Jĕnar's propagation of esoteric knowledge that they viewed as a threat to the social and political order of the time and to their own authority. The story, which appears in, among others, *Babad Demak*, *Sĕrat Wali Sana*, *Sĕrat Siti Jĕnar* and *Babad Jaka Tingkir* often delves into Siti Jĕnar's teachings and, in its depiction of his execution, includes details of the four-colored, fragrant blood flowing out then returning to his body, his severed head reconnecting to his body and his disappearance into the sky, leaving no trace.[44] The walis, who are eager to be rid of him, watch in a mix of awe and

43 The Arabic reads: *Fa-aynamā tuwallū fa-thamma wajhu ʾllāhi* – فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا۟ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ ٱللَّهِ.

44 See, for example, *Wali Sana*, canto 51: 9–33 in kinanthi. https://www.sastra.org/arsip-dan-sejarah/umum/1413-wali-sana-tanaya-1955-124-pupuh-39-57?s=sitijenar, accessed September 15, 2021; *Babad Tanah Jawi*, canto 28: 3–28 in sinom. https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/babad-tanah-jawi/1816-babad-tanah-jawi-no-1-van-dorp-1923-1083-pupuh-13-30?s=sitijenar, accessed September 15, 2021; in *Sitijĕnar*, based on *Babad Demak*, Siti Jĕnar is not executed by the walis but decides on the time of his own death through control of the breath: *Sitijĕnar*, H. Buning, c. 1921, canto 9:1–37 in sinom.

apprehension as he refuses to die the way all humans do, defying the walis and their wishes even in what was supposed to be his final hour. In several tellings Siti Jĕnar's spilled blood spells out the Arabic words "there is no God but Allah," while his voice speaks to the assembled, proclaiming his truth. It is thus but a glimpse of this fuller scene that is referenced in the brief Shahid Jabar episode, yet due to its centrality within written and also oral Javanese traditions, even this ultra-abbreviated version – which highlights the laughter in the midst of grave danger, the fragrance spreading and the head rolling to the ground and attesting to God's all-pervading presence – was likely enough to resonate powerfully and unmistakably for the pĕsantren audience of the Ambiya.

As in the examples above of building the mosques by Ibrahim and Sunan Kalijaga and the reception of divine favor by Thalut and, again, by Sunan Kalijaga, here too the context of the scene depicted is different from the one it evokes: the Shahid Jabar episode is set in Medina in the time of the Prophet and involves one of his lesser known companions and an infidel king, while Siti Jĕnar's episode is set in Java and concerns a disagreement among the walis, Siti Jĕnar's fellow Muslims and fellow leaders of Islam in Java. Yet both instances have at their core an exposition of the relationship between God and Man and both are profound, because the companion Shahid Jabar was revealing the truth of Islam and the presence of God everywhere to an infidel (J. *kapir*) king, while Siti Jĕnar was exposing a truth hidden from many, with the threat of death meaningless for both as they had attained a higher plane of being. The names of the protagonists – Shahid Jabar and Siti Jĕnar – are linked by identical initials and number of syllables as well as proximity in sound, with each embedded through language in its own context: the former in the Arab Middle East where Shahid Jabar bore witness to God's oneness (i.e., as a *shahīd*), the latter in the earth, or land of Java (i.e., *siti*).

Both episodes depict a moment of ambivalence and struggle. The walis do not claim Siti Jĕnar is lying but fear the consequences of Truth reaching the wrong ears and the social and political implications of such misguided dissemination. The king's words and deeds express an explicit conflict between old and new ways, as he feels compelled to question Shahid Jabar about following the Prophet yet tries to prevent him from spreading beliefs that will challenge the status quo. Shahid Jabar's criticism of the gamelan music evokes a very harsh response in the king, reflecting his ambivalence as he is pulled in two opposing directions. In a way, this is what many wali tales are about:

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https://www.sastra.org/agama-dan-kepercayaan/kebatinan-dan-mistik/1265-sitijenar-h-buning-c-1921-2-436, accessed September 15, 2021. On the Siti Jĕnar episode and its appearance in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir*, see Florida 1995: 353–66; Pigeaud 1967: 83–84.

the process of accommodating an Islam brought from elsewhere to Javanese culture. And although in many a tale the encounter is depicted as agreeable, it must have been, in reality, a long and often rough process of push and pull, admiration and rejection. The Shahid Jabar scene offers a glimpse of the initial stages of Islamization, of anger, doubt, frustration, and a clinging to the familiar including, poignantly, to the heart-rending music that Shahid Jabar wishes to expunge.[45] And while the king reacts violently upon hearing of the gamelan's prohibition, he is also filled with wonder upon seeing Shahid Jabar's response to his aggressive deed and he repeats the Arabic Qur'anic quote he just heard flawlessly, word for word, as if reciting the profession of faith (Ar. *shahāda*). Rulers and religious leaders may have much to lose from change or from widening the circles of those with access to knowledge. The king worries about Muhammad's new and competing form of leadership, while the walis are concerned about spreading a truth they recognize to many others, thus doubt and apprehension pervade these affect-filled scenes.

It is intriguing to explore the analogies that arise from juxtaposing the Ambiya and wali tales. In the example of the "pillar episode," the mosques in Arabia and Java are compared, as are the prophet Ibrahim and Sunan Kalijaga, that is, a prophet and patriarch is likened to a wali. Through the "omen of leadership" scene, a future king, Thalut, and the wali Sunan Kalijaga are compared. But in the Shahid Jabar episode the infidel king who killed Shahid Jabar may be associated with the wali – in some tellings Sunan Kalijaga, in others Sunan Kudus – who struck Siti Jěnar. Is the text suggesting the walis be viewed as infidels because of their unwillingness to share the Unity of Being with the masses of believers? Yet Shahid Jabar, the Prophet's Companion, is also compared with a wali, i.e. Siti Jěnar, possessor of Truth who evaded the other walis, depicted by tradition as somewhat narrow minded and stiff. In this instance the implicit comparison is not between wali and prophet or wali and king but between two walis, one of whom (Siti Jěnar) is likened to the Prophet's companion while another (Sunan Kudus or Kalijaga) is associated with an infidel king. The comparisons, however, should not be taken too literally. As is clear from the three examples presented, the comparisons shift from one tale to the next and point to different roles ascribed to the walis and different associations that were attached to them. Despite the fact that the links between walis

45 The tension related to playing music in general, and gamelan music in particular, is resolved in some tellings by the walis being credited with bringing the gamelan to Java, as they are also credited with introducing the wayang shadowplay and other "quintessentially Javanese" art forms. For a discussion of the walis' approach to gamelan music see Rahimsyah 1997: 104; on the *bonang*'s use by Raden Makdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang) to draw people closer to Islam, see ibid., 117.

and Ambiya figures are not made explicitly, the echoes created by biographical similarities and by the range of social and religious issues these tales evoke in the audiences' minds, allows them to move in thought and imagination between the ancient world of the prophets and the more recent Javanese past, with the main goal, I suggest, being weaving two great traditions of Islamic history into one. This process leaves behind dichotomies of "Arab" and "local" Islam, ancient and more recent, "authentic" and "syncretic," and invites the reader or listener of the Ambiya to imagine these canonical figures as belonging to one and the same realm.

7 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter asked whether the tales of the prophets were read, recited, taught, and discussed within Java's pĕsantren milieu in the nineteenth century. And if the tales were indeed embraced in such settings, how were they then adapted to the world of practice and ethics inhabited by santri and kyai? Put differently, what was the relationship between practices, beliefs and attitudes, and these well-known stories?

One path to address such questions is by considering how practices and values popular in Java at the time found their way into the stories. As examples, we might examine the pilgrimage to holy graves, respect toward elders, and belief in the supernatural. Another example, the one highlighted here, concerns the wali-Ambiya interface: the relationship between the very popular stories depicting the lives and deeds of the wali sanga credited with bringing Islam to Java and the Ambiya tales. By considering this interface the chapter also wishes to begin exploring the role of storytelling within the wider curriculum of theological, legal, and grammatical texts studied at Java's Islamic educational institutions.

Thinking comparatively about the Ambiya and the walis helps one see that although the prophets are ultimately the main figures in the Javanese Ambiya texts, and the narrative logic is one depicting a line of prophets leading up to Muhammad, there are many other characters populating the tales, some of whom were discussed throughout this chapter. No doubt plenty of the "non-nabi" characters can be defined as "minor," as they may appear only briefly or with little detail, yet as Tony Day, following Woloch, convincingly shows in his chapter, minor characters exist as a category because despite what the term may initially suggest, they are strangely central to many texts.[46]

46 Alex Woloch (2003: 37), cited in Day (this volume).

In the Ambiya, such characters' links to the walis' biographies prove precisely this point.

The three examples I discussed converge – at least if particular tellings are taken into account – on the same wali, and it is intriguing to consider how the biography of Sunan Kalijaga, no doubt the most prominent of the walis in most wali sanga accounts, overlaps with that of the Patriarch of Islam Ibrahim, with that of Thalut, the first Israelite king who was ultimately a tragic figure, and with Raja Razanji, the infidel king. However, the comparison is not meant to suggest that Sunan Kalijaga is the only wali whose deeds are linked with those of Ambiya characters. There are additional cases to be laid out, like that of the infant prophet Musa (Moses) being placed in a basket and cast upon the waters of the Nile and a very similar event during Sunan Giri's early life, or the infatuation of older women, mother-figures, with both Yusuf and Sunan Giri when they were young men.[47] The comparison's goal is also not to map the wali tales perfectly unto those of the Ambiya or vice versa, but rather to point to the ways in which, through evoking their common biographical episodes within one of Java's most popular literary traditions, a range of figures of the Ambiya tales and those of the walis seem to inhabit one and the same world. The texts suggest a certain interchangeability between the two categories of figures, one that fits with a broader phenomenon within Javanese literature in which characters, tropes and roles are often interchangeable across texts and genres, as found for example also in van der Molen's discussion of the Ramayana and Panji tales, or Bogaerts' analysis of the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung*, a tendency that has consistently shaped Javanese storyworlds.

The two Ambiya manuscripts from which my examples were drawn come from nineteenth-century pĕsantren educational settings. MSB L12 notes explicitly that it was composed for teaching and the many illustrations that adorn its pages bring the text to life in form and color, while EAP 061 is from Pesantren Langitan in Tuban, East Java. Reading and comparing additional Ambiya texts will contribute to a better understanding of the interface phenomenon and, more broadly, the place of Ambiya tales within pĕsantren life. However, for the time being, it seems clear that the two Ambiya manuscripts which I discussed do not form exceptions within the pĕsantren milieu. Thus, in his 2015 Leiden University dissertation on manuscript collections in East Javanese pĕsantren (to which MS. EAP061/1/95 belongs), Amiq mentions several Ambiya and states that "The *Layang Ambiya* seems to have been

47 In the case of Yusuf, the woman was the wife of the chief minister of Egypt al-'Azīz (known in the Bible as Potiphar), and in the case of Sunan Giri, his adoptive mother Nyai Gĕdhe Pinatih.

the most widely copied text in the area."[48] Important follow-up questions are whether the wali-Ambiya interface phenomenon is found only or predominantly in pĕsantren Ambiya manuscripts, i.e., representing a particular "Javanese Islam" for which wali veneration is central and that would have an interest in linking the walis to the prophets and other major Ambiya figures? Or is it of much broader occurrence? Is it found beyond Java, and if so, would this indicate a dissemination of the wali tales further afield?[49]

The texts discussed depict the lives of the prophets and other figures in ways that evoke the world of the wali tales. The associations made between the biographies and episodes formed one way of situating the prophets in Java and Javanese wali traditions within the Islamic Ambiya genre. The temporal question of who preceded whom and where the inspiration for the common motifs lay may not matter as much as the ways in which Ambiya figures of various strata and importance, and walis, merged or meshed in minds and imaginations. And even if, clearly, in strictly chronological terms the prophets' tales are much older than those of the walis, I believe our thinking about directionality should not be clear cut: the Ambiya stories and their lessons are one of the pĕsantren's foundations, and give meaning to life as Muslims, but the Ambiya texts also reinforce this importance by tying their stories to local saints and local practices, while all this unfolds (especially in the case of MSB L12) within the framework of a manuscript that was explicitly composed for instructing the young, for guiding and directing within a particular historical and cultural moment of pĕsantren life. Beyond the temporal question, the interface phenomenon could be viewed as one more form of the localization of Islam in Java; but in fact, the dichotomy of foreign and local is less valid here than the way the figures depicted in the Ambiya and their echoes or shadows in the wali tales mutually constitute one another. That is, the prophets and other Ambiya figures take on aspects of Javanese life and culture, including their links to the walis, yet they remain concurrently as foreign figures depicted as living in a distant time and place. The walis take on elements of the Ambiya world but, since they do not explicitly appear in the texts and their presence within the stories is fragmented, echo-like and situated in the imagination, they too traverse both spheres but remain first and foremost in Java, where

48 Amiq 2015: 32.

49 To the best of my knowledge, there are only a few known tellings of the wali sanga stories in languages of the Archipelago other than Javanese. Of course, like many other cases, this assumption may be due to a lacuna in research. Two Malay tellings I am aware of are MS. IOL Jav 12 at the British Library (a translation from Javanese) and the *Hikayat Tuan Gusti*, 1897, from colonial Ceylon, Hussainmiya Collection, Dept. of National Archives, Sri Lanka, MF 182.

their tombs are venerated and where their followers can continue to pray for their mediation. This mutual constitution or mutual dependency of the two groups of figures, both located at the core of a central stream of Javanese piety, signifies an ongoing, unresolved yet fruitful process of creating Javanese Islamic belonging.

The Ambiya textual tradition opens up additional paths for study and exploration. As is true for many of the texts discussed in this volume, the Ambiya too awaits a time when many more of its tellings will be read closely, analyzed, and compared, bringing to light not only their rich variations of content, style, and tone but also aspects of illumination, illustration, and script use, and of the social contexts in which the Ambiya were read as history, literature, and manuals of religious guidance. For now, just a few suggestions for further thought.

For scholars of literature, the Ambiya texts are a vast repository of traveling motifs that can be followed across time, religions, genres, and places. Thus, Siti Jĕnar's defiant proclamation at his trial has been linked to that of the famous tenth-century Persian mystic al-Ḥallāj, while the trope of a baby cast upon the waters to be found and raised to become a great man is common to the Biblical story of Moses, the Javanese Menak Amir Hamzah and Sunan Giri, among others.[50] The way such traveling motifs and tropes have been incorporated into the Ambiya points to their relevance in different contexts of the Islamic world and offers a window on the relationship between established religion and folklore.

Already mentioned was the way the Ambiya overlap with various "branch stories" that depict the life of a particular prophet or an episode of Muhammad's life. Also intriguing are the Ambiya's links to other Islamic and Javanese genres, central among them the *maulid* devotional texts that center on the Seal of the Prophets and are recited in commemoration of his birth and on other occasions, but that often mention briefly other prophets and their signature deeds and epithets. For example, when Aminah, the Prophet's mother, speaks of her pregnancy, she recalls how several prophets came to her in her dreams, bringing her good tidings about her yet to be born child. In just a few words, or sometimes an epithet (i.e. Ibrahim as *kalilullah*, "beloved of God;" Musa as *kalimullah*, "the one God spoke to;" Isa as *al-masih*, "the messiah"), these prophets are introduced, as are additional figures, especially the women who came to assist her at the birth (i.e. Maryam, "Imran's daughter;" Asiya, "Pharoah's

50 On the complex, non-linear connections between traditions of al-Ḥallāj and Southeast Asian Islam, see Feener 1998.

wife").[51] Such abbreviated tales, hints, or epithets of the prophets, appearing also in other Javano-Islamic genres, function like echo chambers in which a word, a deed, or a phrase conjure in the listener's mind a story, a memory, a scene. Such hints would be especially meaningful to those familiar with the Ambiya texts, for whom even brief mentions would bring to life much longer and fuller narratives and associations.

Finally, thinking about the Ambiya, especially within a pĕsantren context, encourages us to seek a better understanding of the santri, kyai and pĕsantren world of nineteenth-century Java, despite or perhaps because of how different they were from those we have come to expect in the present. A persistence in the use of terminology – in this case of "pĕsantren" – often masks significant shifts, the study of which, along with the study of continuities, can be greatly enriched by the close reading of Javanese texts.

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51 See, for example, *Babad Maulud*, BL MS. Or. 16873, 22v–24r.

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CHAPTER 7

Where Is Mecca? Or, Map and Territory: Reflections from Java

Verena Meyer

Abstract

No matter where they are, Muslims around the world face the Ka'ba in Mecca during prayer. Yet the meaning of facing Mecca has not always and everywhere been the same. In this chapter, I discuss two famous stories of Javanese Muslims – one a semi-legendary saint, the other a modern reformer – who re-oriented their contemporaries' prayers by discerning a new and better way to align Java with Mecca. Comparing the two accounts, I argue that these Javanese examples share a religious imaginary in which a periphery is contingent on a center as the locus of authority. In the conceptual vocabulary of Jonathan Z. Smith, Islam appears to have a strong locative sense, where religious truth is mapped onto a central site. The two Javanese narratives, however, undercut this possibility of a clear distinction between center and periphery on which Smith's theory rests, as it is from the periphery that the center is established and given its meaning. These accounts therefore de-center common understandings of religion and space and invite us to rethink the relation between center and periphery in religious contexts anew.

Keywords

center/periphery – epistemology – Islam – modernism – space

In 1898, Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923) – who would later in 1912 found Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's largest modernist Islamic mass organization – was a rabble-rouser in his native Kauman, Yogyakarta.[1] He had performed

1 The Kauman is a quarter in many Javanese cities that is home to the *kaum* or religious officials. In Yogyakarta, the kaum of Kauman have traditionally been in charge of the Great Mosque (J. *Masjid Gedhe*), the spiritual center of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, erected in 1773. For more on the history of Kauman, see Bonneff 1985 and Adaby Darban 2010.

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the hajj in 1890 and had stayed for a year in Mecca in order to study, as many other young Muslims from the Netherlands East Indies did at the time.[2] While in Mecca, Ahmad Dahlan became aware of reformist movements elsewhere in the Islamic world. Upon his arrival back in Yogyakarta, he pursued an interest in astronomy and, following in the footsteps of contemporaneous reformers in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, he sought to establish the exact location of the *qibla*, the direction of the Kaʿba in Mecca toward which Muslims were oriented during their prayers (Laffan 2002: 168–69). Equipped with a globe and compass, he determined that his fellow Kauman Muslims who prayed at the Great Mosque did not face Mecca, but rather the east coast of Africa, missing Mecca by thousands of miles. But when he campaigned for a change in the qibla, his superiors were dismayed. Not only was Ahmad Dahlan barred from implementing his newly established direction of prayer at the Great Mosque, but he was even prevented from implementing his corrected qibla at his own school and prayer house, the *langgar kidul*;[3] which is to say, when he tried to make this change, his superiors had the building with the offensive qibla demolished. Their resistance, however, was short-lived: today, in the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta, as in most other mosques in Java, spherical trigonometric calculations determine the correct orientation during prayer.

Ahmad Dahlan is not the only Javanese Muslim who is remembered for correcting the qibla orientation of a famous mosque. When the so-called nine saints (J. *wali sanga*) who, according to tradition, converted the Javanese people to Islam, built the mosque of Java's first Islamic polity Demak, they were at first unable to orient the mosque correctly toward the Kaʿba. Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine saints with exceptional spiritual powers,[4] adjusted both the Mosque of Demak and the Kaʿba, causing them to face each other, and thus established the right qibla.

No matter where they are in the world, Muslims face the Kaʿba from their respective locations. The geographic centrality of Mecca, and especially of the Kaʿba, becomes manifest in the five daily prayers (A. *ṣalāh*), one of the five pillars of Islam, where the ones praying are oriented toward the Kaʿba, the historical and ritual center of Islam. But as we see in these two examples, being oriented toward Mecca has not always meant the same thing to Muslims.

2 See Laffan 2002: 103–12 for a description of the educational milieu of Mecca at the time and the influence the Meccan teachers had on their Southeast Asian students.

3 The Javanese langgar kidul means "southern prayer house." At the time, there were four prayer houses (J. *langgar*) in Kauman, where teachers would gather students for instructing them in Qur'anic recitation, Islamic sciences, and communal prayer. Ahmad Dahlan's langgar kidul was the site where Muhammadiyah came into being as a movement.

4 For more on Sunan Kalijaga, see also Bogaerts's and Ricci's contributions in this volume.

FIGURE 7.1
K.H.A. Dahlan with his globe
HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:K.H._AHMAD_DAHLAN_%281868-1923%29,_P38.JPG

In this chapter, I will analyze two accounts of how these particular Javanese Muslims, Sunan Kalijaga and Ahmad Dahlan, corrected and realigned the qibla of their mosques to the Kaʿba. While pointing to the differences in their premises and methods, I argue that both stories share a religious imaginary in which a periphery is linked to a center as the locus of authority. In both cases, however, through the way in which the linkage occurs, the status of periphery and center seems to be undercut. I draw on the work of the historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith, who posited that religious understandings of place are characterized by a conflict between two opposing senses, a "locative" and a "utopian" vision of the world. According to him, the locative sense focuses on a center as the locus of power and truth, whereas the utopian sense assumes that power and truth are not geographically bound, thus attributing equal status to places that the locative sense would consider peripheral. By focusing on stories of qibla alignments, I hope to take a new direction in the study of Javanese literature by comparing a literary text with the memory of Ahmad Dahlan. Despite their obvious differences, the conceptualizations of the qibla in both accounts decenter western understandings of religion and space. Specifically, I examine Smith's distinction to show how, in the stories of Sunan Kalijaga and Ahmad Dahlan, the very meaning of center and periphery is not stable but shifts, complicating the clear distinction between the locative and the utopian, and inviting us to rethink the meaning of both.

1 Oriented toward the Center: Mecca and Islam in Southeast Asia

Islam as a historical religious tradition originated in Mecca, and the geographic location of Mecca continues to be of central importance for Muslims. Of the five pillars, two – the hajj and the five daily prayers – take Mecca, or the Kaʿba, as their destination and point of orientation. If Mecca is the center, every other place in the world is in a peripheral position to it. But some places seem to be more peripheral than others. Thousands of miles away from the Arabian peninsula where Islam was revealed and first spread, Southeast Asia was a relative latecomer to widespread conversion. When Islam arrived, it was first brought by seafarers to major port cities. Champa in contemporary Cambodia and Pasai, a city-state in northeast Sumatra, are thought to have been the first major centers of Islam in Southeast Asia in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries; other port cities on the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago followed suit. The north coast of Java was largely Islamized by the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.[5] Islam, it thus seems, arrived in Southeast Asia after its defining historical moments and the consolidation of its canonical scriptures, legal schools, theological orientations, and Sufi institutions and traditions.

Muslims in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago were often aware of the historic and geographical gap that separated their Islamization from the Prophet Muhammad and the beginnings of Islam. In a collection of Southeast Asian conversion narratives published by Russell Jones (1979), many narrators constructed direct spatial and temporal links between the Mecca of Muhammad and his companions and the Islamization of their respective times and places.[6] One such example is a story about Samudera-Pasai, the first Islamic city-state in insular Southeast Asia at Sumatra's north coast, which had probably become Islamic by the late thirteenth century.[7] The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, a classical Malay prose narrative of the kings of Samudera-Pasai that was likely composed in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (Braginsky 2004: 111), includes an account of the conversion of Malik al-Salih, the city state's first ruler.

5 The coming of Islam to Java was described for instance by Djajadiningrat 1983, de Graaf and Pigeaud 1976: 1–24, and Ricklefs 2006: 11–32.

6 The narrative link of conversion to Islam on the one hand, and Mecca as the center of Islam on the other, also appears in more recent conversion narratives discussed in Hermansen 1999, where the embrace of Islam by Western subjects often culminates in their journey to Mecca.

7 A dated tombstone of a ruler of Samudera-Pasai, Malik al-Salih, bearing an Islamic inscription in Arabic, led scholars to believe that Samudera-Pasai had become Islamic by 1297. See Jones 1979: 133. See also Drewes 1968. More recently, Lambourn 2008 has complicated this assumption by showing that the tombstone in question originated two centuries after the ruler's death, thus calling into question the veracity of the exact date.

The Islamization of Samudera-Pasai, we read here, had already been ordained by the Prophet Muhammad, who foretold the city's foundation and instructed his companions to go there and to convert its people (Jones 2013: 18). Then, some time after the Prophet's death, the caliph heard of the city called Samudera and set out to go there. Meanwhile, the ruler of Samudera-Pasai, Merah Silau, had a dream in which he encountered an unknown man who ordered him to open his mouth. When Merah Silau obeyed, the person spat into it and said: "Your name shall be Sultan Malikul Saleh. Now you will become a Muslim by reciting the two statements of the profession of faith" (Jones 2013: 21). The man then announced the arrival of the ship and ordered that the ruler and his people follow their words and practices, which were in accordance with the teachings of Islam. In response to Malik al-Salih's question who the man was, he answered: "'I am the Prophet Muhammad the Apostle of God' (may God bless him and give him peace) 'who was in Mecca'" (Jones 2013: 22). As Malik al-Salih woke from his sleep, he realized that not only was he circumcised, but he was also able to recite by heart the Qur'an although he had never been taught. In this conversion narrative, the temporal and spatial gap between the moment of Revelation and the coming of Islam to Southeast Asia is bridged by the Prophet Muhammad himself, who becomes a central agent in the Islamization of a local community.

The Muslims of Samudera-Pasai were not the only ones to remember their conversion as having occurred at the hands of the Prophet Muhammad, or as an event that was initiated in the Middle East.[8] Neither did the centrality of Mecca as the historical center of Islam only play a role in conversion narratives. Indeed, the Kaʿba and Mecca have long figured as sites of authenticity in Southeast Asian Muslims' theological imaginaries. In traditional Javanese literature,[9] kings or *wali* are often said to have prayed every Friday at the Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca (Drewes 1995); and many Javanese narratives, including

8 Other examples include Malacca on the Malay peninsula, the city state that succeeded Samudera-Pasai as the economic, political, and religious center for the region, and which recorded a narrative that is markedly similar to the one told in Pasai, and Tallo' in Sulawesi, where the Prophet arrives on a ship to teach the king to pray. A different variant can be found in a Bugis narrative, where the movement is reversed as the king journeys in a dream to Mecca, where he learns about Islam, thus also closing the geographic gap. See Jones 1979: 136–37, 149–52.

9 I follow Florida 1995 in my understanding of traditional Javanese literature. Florida (1995: 10) defines "traditional Java" as the "nonunitary discursive world through which a wide variety of Javanese subjects lived" during Dutch colonialism in Java. The literature of this discursive world, while heterogeneous, shared certain unifying characteristics, such as usually being composed in *macapat* meters (1995: 11), and their high degree of intertextuality and reflexivity (1995: 21).

stories of the Arab hero Amir Hamzah (see Arps in this volume) or the *wayang Menak* (Setiodarmoko 2002), are also set in Mecca.

In his collection of essays entitled *Map is Not Territory*, J.Z. Smith drew on the work of Mircea Eliade to discuss the religious meaning of space and spatial relations, calling it "*the* fundamental question" (1993: 103). According to him, religious understandings of space are universally characterized by a "coexistential conflict" (1993: 102) between two different senses. The one he calls the "locative vision of the world (which emphasizes place)" (1993: 102) appears to map onto these common representations of the relation between Mecca and Southeast Asia. They are characterized by a clear hierarchy: Mecca, as the center, is the locus of truth that needs to be accessed from the periphery to partake in this truth. Only through its connection to Mecca can the periphery be Muslim in the first place. This locative mapping of religious truth, according to Smith, points to a "centrifugal view of the world which emphasizes the importance of the 'Center'" (1993: 101) which "guarantees meaning and value through structures of congruity and conformity" (1993: 292). The opposite of the locative vision is the "*utopian* vision of the world (using the term in its strict sense: the value of being in no place)" (1993: 101). Religious traditions with a utopian vision have "a more centripetal world which emphasizes the importance of periphery and transcendence" (1993: 101), such that adherents are likely to "turn[] in rebellion and flight to a new world and a new mode of creation" (1993: 309).

The injunction of facing Mecca during prayers and other pious ritual acts suggests that this locative vision of the world is characteristic not just of Islam in Southeast Asia, but Islam more generally.[10] This direction of prayer, or qibla, goes back to the Prophet Muhammad, who changed the direction of prayer by replacing Jerusalem with the Kaʿba in Mecca. This shift in the direction of prayer is documented and discussed in the Qurʾan and the Sunna.[11] The geographic orientation toward Mecca was understood to correspond to the intention of those performing ṣalāh to direct their prayers to no one

10 This vision is, however, not limited to Islam, but can also be found in Judaism, where facing Jerusalem during prayer has been practiced since at least the Second Temple period. See Neis 2018.

11 In the Qurʾan, the qibla is specifically discussed in *Sūrat al-Baqara*: "Foolish people will say, 'What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face?' We only made the direction the one you used to face [Prophet] in order to distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels … Turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces to it." See Abdel Haleem 2010, 2: 142–44. For Prophetic traditions around the qibla, see Bukhārī 1976: 394, 405, 428. For a more general overview, see Wensinck and King 2012.

other than God. According to Ari Gordon, who studied the role of the qibla in early Islam, the orientation for prayer was a distinctive marker of religious identity that demarcated communities from others (Gordon 2018: 66). In part, this was attributable to the spread of imperial or diasporic religions, where people in far-flung places shared a spiritual orientation that was inscribed through a common spatial orientation (Gordon 2018: 81). Because of their common orientation toward Mecca, Muslims came to be known as the *ahl al-qibla*, or "the people of the qibla" as an inclusivist identity marker for all Muslims during the first centuries of Islam. Leor Halevi similarly showed that in the early years of Islam, Muslims adopted the practice of burying the dead in graves oriented toward Mecca, arguing that it "promoted a sense of belonging to a single community, a community whose members, no matter where in the world they died, would all seem equal to one another – yet manifestly different from outsiders," such that burial in the direction of the qibla "represented for Muslims a ritual form expressive of their own particular confessional identity" (Halevi 2007: 189). To slightly paraphrase Smith, early Islam, like other religions, strove to manipulate situations in order to create spaces where power and truth are translated into particular sites and mapped onto a sacred landscape (Smith 1993: 291). The center, and the orientation of people on the periphery to it, established what it meant to be a Muslim, no matter where people were.

While the qibla orientation thus seems to correspond closely to Smith's locative sense, Smith explicitly distanced himself from the notion that the two senses of space can exist apart from each other; instead, they are coeval and available everywhere, at any time.[12] Drawing on Smith, Gordon similarly argued that the locative and the utopian cannot be neatly disambiguated with regard to the qibla, since the possibility to access the center from any location in the world enables performances of sacred geography from any location. Through their "bodily reference to the epicenter of all places, Muslims performed identification with the collective when- and wherever they aligned with Mecca for worship," thereby transforming "any location into a sacred place" (Gordon 2018: 16). Furthermore, the centrality of Mecca can only be sustained if it is constantly acknowledged at the periphery through the qibla orientation (Gordon 2018: 13–14). In this context, Gordon disagreed with Smith that the relation between the locative and the utopian was always a

12 Specifically, Smith rejected Eliade's understanding according to which the locative and utopian correspond to archaic and modern societies, respectively. Faure (1987), building on Smith, used the example of ancient China to show that the locative and utopian likewise do not map onto so-called "great" and "little" traditions.

"coexistential conflict," (Smith 1993: 102), calling it instead one of "synergism" (Gordon 2018: 14).

But irrespective of whether conflict or synergism is dominant, a problem that remains is that the meaning of the center, of Mecca, is not always the same or self-evident, complicating the very meaning of the locative and the utopian sense. As historians of Islamic science have shown, Muslim scientists had developed the mathematical methods to determine the qibla with a very high degree of accuracy as early as the ninth century. Nonetheless, for a long time Muslims continued to use a variety of methods, based on different paradigms of knowledge, to ascertain the correct orientation during prayer, including folk astronomy or alignments with mountains or winds.[13] Although they were misaligned from a mathematical perspective, the Muslims who built the mosques and prayed in them still understood themselves to be fully oriented toward Mecca (Gordon 2018: 234–35). If studying religion means exploring what Smith understood as maps of sacred sites or the construction of conceptual space within which practitioners can meaningfully dwell (1993: 291), we also need to consider differences between what these metaphorical maps look like and what they are supposed to do. With their fluctuating understandings and implementations of the qibla, these different maps make evident that the very meaning of Mecca as the historical and geographic center of Islam, and of one's orientation toward it, was constructed not from the center, but from the periphery. In Java, many such metaphorical maps, or conceptualizations of space imbued with religious meaning, define space as Islamic by pointing to the center, Mecca. But how the center is mapped is not always the same, and neither is the meaning of Mecca.

2 Realigning the Periphery, Realigning the Center: a Traditional Narrative

The historian Nile Green has shown that the Islamization of South Asia through Sufi migrants was a process whereby mobile and portable religious resources of Islam, such as stories, beliefs, and rituals, became imprinted and enshrined in the immobile and static resources of sacred landscapes (Green

13 See King 1982; Hawkins and King 1982: 104. A particularly interesting example is the qibla orientation of the Javanese in Suriname, who came as plantation workers in the 1890s and continued to face west during prayer, as they had done in Java. Even after their supposed error was pointed out to them, many insisted that they were nonetheless facing Mecca. See Suparlan 1995: 141–49; Hoefte 2017.

2012: xiii). This was especially the case with shrines around the tombs of wali, as their graves fastened the global and timeless truths of Islam to a particular place. "In this way," Green wrote, "narrative and space, text and territory, worked together as the saint served to bridge the past and present time of his followers" (2012: 3). In the Islamization of Southeast Asia, the acceptance of the new religion was likewise marked by processes of emplacement that were accompanied by stories and texts that narrated the coming of Islam to the region. The sacred geography that was imprinted in Javanese lands and told in their stories joined a strong localism with a connective cosmopolitanism (Green 2012: 35), ultimately linking Java to Mecca. The local and the global were intimately entwined in these geographic and spiritual imaginaries. To explore these processes, I will analyze the *Seh Malaya*, the story of Sunan Kalijaga, arguably the most famous of the nine saints, who is also discussed by Bogaerts and Ricci in this volume. According to tradition, Sunan Kalijaga is the only one of the nine saints to be native Javanese, and as such perhaps uniquely suitable for mapping the global onto the local. This is especially the case in the famous episode of his aligning the qibla, in which the global is imprinted on the local and vice versa through such a working together of text and territory. Through this process of emplacement, I argue, the distinction between the utopian and the locative sense is effectively collapsed.

The story of Seh Malaya, another name for Sunan Kalijaga, is based on and incorporates older textual traditions, both from Java and the wider Islamic world.[14] One of them is the *Dewa Ruci* or, in English, *The Subtle God*, which tells the story of Bima (Skt. Bhīma), one of the Pandawa (Skt. Pāṇḍava) brothers from the *Mahābhārata*, who searches for the water of life. In the process, he finds Dewa Ruci, a miniature version of himself, who invites Bima to enter him through his ear. Once inside, Bima finds an immense ocean and attains mystical realization. Beginning in the eighteenth century, poets at the Javanese royal courts reworked the Old Javanese text into a Sufi allegory (Arps 2011: 12). The *Seh Malaya* is one such Sufi adaptation. It also draws on Islamic textual antecedents, including the stories of the wali sanga and the Qur'anic Sura of the Cave, in which Moses (Nabi Mūsā) encounters God's mysterious friend Khiḍr.[15]

14 For more on the *Seh Malaya* and its textual antecedents, see Johns 1966; Arps 2011; and Quinn 2018.

15 The Sura of the Cave (Ar. *Sūrat al-Kahf*), the eighteenth chapter of the Qur'an, is made up of three principal narratives, but all three of them seem to elude coherent narrativization. In the story of Mūsā and Khiḍr, the second of these three narratives (65–82), Khiḍr repeatedly acts outrageously, ultimately revealing that he has knowledge of the future and hidden things unknown to Mūsā that make his actions reasonable and good.

Bima, in the *Seh Malaya*, is thus replaced by Sunan Kalijaga and Dewa Ruci turns into Khiḍr, called Nabi Kilir in Javanese.

In the following, I will base my textual analysis on a version of the *Seh Malaya* written in macapat verse entitled *The Story of Seh Mlaya Beginning at the Time when He was Not Yet a Wali* (J. *Cariyosipun Seh Mlaya Awit Kala Dereng Juměněng Wali*).[16] This version of the *Seh Malaya*[17] begins with the familiar story of Sunan Kalijaga or Seh Malaya's youth as a highwayman. Humbled and awed after trying and failing to rob Sunan Benang (more usually known as Sunan Bonang), a wali with superior spiritual gifts who proves to be invulnerable to Sunan Kalijaga's attack, Sunan Kalijaga repents of his criminal ways and asks to become Sunan Benang's student. Sunan Benang agrees, instructs him to practice extreme acts of asceticism, and leaves him again to follow his own pursuits: "It is said about Sunan Benang," we read in the *Seh Malaya*, "that he wanted to pray in Mecca. In the blink of an eye, he was there, and after his prayers he went back home."[18] By virtue of his spiritual powers, the text seems to suggest, Sunan Benang can overcome the geographic difference between Java and Mecca. Eventually he returns to Sunan Kalijaga, who had persevered in his rigorous ascetic exercises, including the *tapa ngidang*, living with and like the deer.[19] But whereas Sunan Benang is happy with his student's progress, the latter is not satisfied and asks Sunan Benang for clear answers about God's truth and guidance. Sunan Benang cannot offer a direct answer, but tells him:

Historically, Khiḍr has been a popular figure all over the Islamic world and is especially prominent in Sufi traditions.

16 This version is part of a Surakarta manuscript titled *Various Books and Poems and Shaṭṭāriyyah Teachings* (J. *Sĕrat Suluk Warna-Warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah*), a compilation that was inscribed in Surakarta in 1864 for K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat by R. Panji Jayaasmara. See Florida 2012: 240–45 for a description of this compilation and the different *suluk* it comprises.

17 *Cariyosipun Seh Mlaya Awit Kala Dereng Juměněng Wali*, 1864. Inscribed for K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat by R. Panji Jayaasmara. Surakarta, Radya Pustaka Museum, Surakarta, MS 333 (henceforth RP 333), 217–87.

18 The Javanese text reads as follows: "Wuwusěn Sinuhun Benang/arsa salat mring Měkah/ sakědhap netra wus rawuh/sabakdane salat pulang" (RP 333, 226).

19 The tapa ngidang is one of several ascetic practices that have likely been practiced in Java since before the advent of Islam. The precise meaning of the practice may have changed over time. Whereas Sunan Kalijaga lived with the deer in the forest and ran like them on all fours, at other times it appears to have been a dietary practice, only eating herbs and grass. See Juynboll 1921.

Heh jěbeng wruhanta
Sipat hidayatulah
Pan sira munggaha Kaji
Marang ing Měkah
Iku marang kang suci
Angambila banyu er janjam ing Kakbah
Iku banyu kang suci
Angalapa brěkah
Kangjěng Nabi panutan

RP 333, 227–28

Oh child, know
the nature of God's guidance
by going on the Hajj
to Mecca,
this is the holy path.
Take water from the zamzam well at the Kaʿba,
this is holy water,
seize the blessings
of the Prophet who is our guide.

Sunan Kalijaga obeys Sunan Benang's command, but not having acquired the fullness of his teacher's spiritual powers, he cannot get to Mecca in the blink of an eye. For him, the distance is a problem. Mecca is out of reach. After a cumbersome journey through Java, he eventually reaches the ocean, where his journey ends: there is no way to continue on to Mecca. Desperate, he seems to have no choice but to give up when he encounters a small figure who turns out to be Nabi Kilir, who tells him that there is no use for him to go to Mecca when he does not yet know what he is looking for.[20] Moreover,

Lamun sira arsa munggah kaji
Marang Měkah kaki ana apa
Mekah pan tilasan bae
Nabi Brahim karuhun
Ingkang yasa kang punang masjid
Nabi Brahim wus sirna
Kang kari mung watu
Gumandul tanpa canthelan
Apa iku kang arsa sira běkteni
Dadi mangran brahala
Kaya pangidhěpaning wong kapir
Paněmbahe esmu ngongka-ongka
Madhěp marang tapekonge

If you want to go on the hajj
to Mecca, child, what for?
In Mecca there are only the remains
of when Nabi Ibrahim first
built the mosque.
Nabi Ibrahim is gone.
What is left are only rocks
hanging with nothing to hang upon.
Is that what you wish to revere?
That is serving an idol as Lord.
Like the beliefs of the nonbelievers
whose worship is just make-believe
and who are turned toward their idols.[21]

20 A more detailed discussion of these passages in the *Seh Malaya*, especially the significance of Nabi Kilir, can be found in Meyer 2021.

21 The Javanese term *tapekong*/*tĕpekong* references Tua Pek Kong, a popular deity among Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, whose name literally means "Grand Uncle." For more on Tua Pek Kong, see Chia 2017.

Nadyan wong kaji iku	Even if those people are hajjis
Yen tan wĕruh paraning khaji	they don't know the way, the destination of the hajj,
Kakbah pan dudu lĕmah	for the Kaʿba is not (built from) earth,
Dudu kayu watu	nor wood or stone.
Margane tan nganggo lunga	The way does not entail travel.
Lamun sira arsa wruh ing Kakbah jati	If you want to know the real Kaʿba
Jatine pan Hidayat	its truth is the Guidance,
Lah ta mara Seh Malaya aglis	Then come quickly, Seh Malaya
Luměbuwa guwagarbaningwang	Enter into my womb.

RP 333, 233–34[22]

In these passages, Nabi Kilir appears to differentiate between a physical, geographical Mecca and Kaʿba on the one hand which, he seems to suggest, are irrelevant, because these holy sites ultimately are just old rocks, left behind by Nabi Ibrahim who died a long time ago. The real Mecca, Nabi Kilir explains, requires no physical journey, but a spiritual journey inside oneself.[23] And indeed, as Bima does with the miniature version of himself in the *Dewa Ruci*,[24] Sunan Kalijaga enters Nabi Kilir through his ear and, once inside his body, is shown God's truth and guidance, attaining mystical realization. The narrative of this part of the story, and the teachings Sunan Kalijaga receives, closely follow the model of the *Dewa Ruci*. Having been shown these esoteric secrets by Nabi Kilir, the two part ways and Sunan Kalijaga once again joins Sunan Benang, who asks his student why he never went to Mecca. Sunan Kalijaga replies:

Andikane Kangjĕng Nabi	"Nabi [Kilir] said,
Gen Kakbah ingkang sampurna	the location of the perfect Kaʿba
Datan kesah ing margane	cannot be reached by road.
Mangke anuwun pitĕdah	Now I ask for advice
Dhatĕng paduka tuwan	from you, lord,

22 For an overview of the range of meanings of *guwagarba*, see Arps 2016: 563–64. I have opted to translate the term as womb for its connotations of gestation and new (spiritual) life. It could also be translated as "the depths of my body."

23 Not all representations of Mecca in Javanese literature differentiate between an authentic internal and an insignificant geographical Mecca like the author of the *Seh Malaya* did. For a counterexample, see Ricci's contribution to this volume, where Mecca and Demak are intimately linked, both spiritually and physically, for example through earth brought from Mecca to Java.

24 In the *Dewa Ruci* narrative, there is an even stronger notion of seeking interior knowledge, since Dewa Ruci, who invites Bima to enter him through his ear, is just a miniature replica of Bima himself.

Punapa karsa pukulun	what is your desire?
Inggih atur pějah gěsang	I surrender life and death to you."
Jěng Sunan Benang lingnya ris	Sunan Benang said softly:
Jěbeng sira wus sinihan	"Child, you already are beloved.
Dadya kakasih Hyang Manon	Become a beloved of the All-Seeing.
Tuhu yen sunan ing jagad	Truly, you are a Sunan in the world
Yen sira pinanggiyan	if you have been met
Lan Kangjěng Nabi pinunjul	by the exalted Nabi
Kang gadhuh ngelmuning Alah	who holds[25] God's knowledge.
Ingsun iki pan kapengin	I also desire
Pinanggiyan kaya sira	to be met like you
Mring Nabi kang luwih kaot	by the most noble Nabi,
Mundur těka sangkan paran	to return to the origin and destination.
Sira padha lan ingwang	You are like me,
Juměněng wali pinunjul	having become an outstanding wali,
Pusakaning waliyolah	a treasure among God's wali."

RP 333, 262–63

Sunan Benang, who had ordered Sunan Kalijaga to go to Mecca, now concedes that reaching the physical destination of the Kaʿba is no longer important. Put differently, in his failure to reach Mecca, Sunan Kalijaga has attained his actual goal of understanding God's truth and guidance. As one of God's beloved, Sunan Kalijaga now has superior powers like his teacher, including the power to travel to Mecca in the blink of an eye to pray (RP 333, 272). Having realized that the physical location of Mecca is not as central as the real, interior Mecca, the physical Mecca is now accessible to him.

These relations between the physical and the real Mecca surface again in one of the last episodes narrated in this version of the *Seh Malaya* about the construction of the Mosque of Demak, Java's first mosque and spiritual center of its first Islamic polity.[26] According to this well-known episode, the wali

25 *Gadhuh*, here translated as hold, means to be entrusted with and use something for a certain amount of time without possessing it.

26 See Florida 1995: 325–37 for a similar analysis of the construction of the Mosque of Demak in a different text. In her analysis, which complements mine, Sunan Kalijaga "effectively localizes universal Islam in Java" (1995: 337) in his construction of the Mosque of Demak. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me that another such example of a localization of universal Islam in Java can be found in the name of the city Kudus, an adaptation of al-Quds (Jerusalem). Such localizations are, of course, not exclusive to Java. According to Ricci 2019: 131, a Sri Lankan tradition holds that the Kaʿba was partially constructed from the rock of Adam's Peak, where Adam fell to earth after his banishment from paradise.

sanga all cooperated to build the mosque but faced a crisis when they realized that they were missing one of the central pillars. Sunan Kalijaga was able to solve the problem by gathering together the debris left over by the construction of the mosque and building from it the needed pillar. Nancy Florida, who analyzed this episode in a different text, argued that Sunan Kalijaga's gathering of the debris to construct a central pillar of the mosque signals that the center of support is put together by peripheral pieces.[27] She suggested that "the poet, perhaps bearing in mind the egalitarianism of Islam, very subtly reminds the careful reader that the central authorities subsist only under the weight of 'the people'" (1995: 332). The subsequent events seem to suggest that a similar relation exists between the peripheral Java and Mecca, the center; for shortly after the pillar has been placed, the wali sanga face another crisis:

Pan wus ngaděg wau ingkang masjid	Already standing erect, the mosque,
Duk purwane jalma nandhang iman	in the olden days when people first embraced the faith,
Pra dadi (*pradondi*) *wali sangane*	The wali sanga debated among themselves,
Satěngah kirang ngidul	some said it was not enough to the south,
Ana ingkang ngalorkěn malih	others said it needed to be further to the north
Lěrěse lawan Kakbah	to align it with the Kaʿba,
Těmah ngalor ngidul	so they moved it north, then south.
Seh Malaya ngaděk sigra	Seh Malaya quickly stood up
Majěng ngidul amrěgagah suku kalih	Facing south, spreading his two legs
Astanya kalih pisan	And his two arms.
Asta kiwa nyandhak sirah masjid	With his left hand he grasped the top of the mosque,
Asta těngěn nyandhak ing betolah	with his right hand he grasped God's House,
Ginathukkěn mastakane	bringing together their two peaks.
Sunan Kali lon wuwus	Sunan Kali said softly:
Alah konca pan kadi pundi	"Oh friends, what do you say,
Napa sampun lěrěsa	is it now correct, at last,
Wau keblatipun	the qibla (of the mosque)?"
Pra wali umyung ngandika	With great tumult, all the wali said:

27 Florida 1995: 327–32. See also Ricci's chapter in this volume.

Sampun inggih lěrěs keblatipun ninggih	"Yes it is, its qibla is indeed aligned
Kalawan Kakbahtullah	with the Kaʿba of God."
Pan wus dadi wau ingkang masjid	All finished now was the mosque.
Purwanira jalma nandhang iman	This was the beginning of the people's embrace of the faith.
Masjid Dĕmak pangadĕge	The Mosque of Demak was erected
Pan tunggil warsanipun	in the same year
Lan bĕdhahe ing Majapahit	in which Majapahit fell,
Wau ing warsanira	which was the year
Alip ing kulawu	Alip in Kulawu.[28]
Duk sĕmana sinĕngkalan	At the time it was given the chronogram
Sirna ilang kartiningrat ratu singgih	Extinguished and disappeared are the Works of the World made by the king indeed.[29]

RP 333, 273–74

The understanding of the qibla we encounter in this passage resonates with the writings of the Islamic Arab-Andalusian theologian Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240), whose thought was often appropriated in Javanese literature, including RP 333.[30] In Ibn al-ʿArabī's speculative Sufism, God is pure essence or being (Ar. *wujūd*), whereas all entities in the universe only have a contingent existence derived from wujūd. Crucially, wujūd not only has an ontological dimension as pure being, but is also an epistemological process, since the Arabic wujūd also translates as "finding," or the phenomenological realization of God's being in a person's awareness (Chittick 2005: 36–37). God in God's pure essence or being, however, cannot be known; it is only through God's attributes or forms in the cosmos that God is disclosed. To articulate this relation between God and the cosmos, as well as being and knowing, Ibn al-ʿArabī often cited a Qurʾanic verse according to which "[t]he East and the West belong to God: wherever you turn, there is His Face" (Abdel Haleem 2010, 2: 115), and a

28 *Alip* is the first year in the eight-year cycle, or *windu*. *Kulawu* is one of thirty *wuku* weeks or *pawukon*, each lasting for seven days, in the *wuku* year of 210 days. For more on the *pawukon*, see Kumar 2018.

29 The year date, 1400, is given as a chronogram (J. *sangkala*), whereby particular words are associated with a number which, put together, are then read back to front. *Sirna* (extinguish) and *ilang* (disappear) appropriately indicate 0. *Kartining* (maker/works) indicates 4 and *rat* (world) is 1. Ricklefs (1978: 18–19) translates the sentence in a different manuscript as "disappeared, gone, was the prosperity of the world." On the significance of the year 1400 AJ in Javanese chronicles marking the fall of Majapahit and the beginnings of Islam, see also Wieringa 2012.

30 See Florida 2019; Meyer 2021.

similar hadith, in which the Prophet Muḥammad is recorded as saying: "God is in the kiblah of the person who performs the *ṣalāt*."[31]

Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, Sunan Kalijaga in the *Seh Malaya* seems to suggest that knowledge of God is only possible through God's self-disclosure through things in the cosmos, so God's servants need to "turn toward themselves and come to know themselves" (Chittick 1998: 95) to know God, as Sunan Kalijaga did during his encounter with Nabi Kilir. As Ibn al-ʿArabī wrote in the *Meccan Openings*, "The face of God is you, so you are the kiblah wherever you may be" (as cited in Chittick 1998: 95). But the narration makes clear that God's disclosure in all places does not undo the significance of central, universally significant places like Mecca, nor of particular and seemingly peripheral places like Java. The relation between center and periphery is not static: when Sunan Kalijaga aligns the Mosque of Demak with the Kaʿba, he grasps both and wiggles the two into alignment with each other. God has no static being apart from God being sought and found as wujūd, and Mecca has no static existence apart from Sunan Kalijaga's quest for it. His wiggling center and periphery into alignment with each other corresponds to the moment when seeking and being are collapsed into a phenomenological realization of God's truth and knowledge. Just as God's being is found when the creatures seeking and God's self-disclosure are realized to be identical, Mecca becomes accessible when Sunan Kalijaga discovers it not by arriving, but by its disclosure to him through his quest for it. Mecca then becomes local in Java, because the identity of being and seeking imprints universal Islamic space and particular Javanese space on each other. As the difference between center and periphery makes way for the realization of God's presence, the meaning of the center – and hence of one's locative orientation toward it – is redefined by the periphery in a revolutionary, utopian move, thus collapsing any meaningful distinction between the two.

3 Making Space for Modern Science: Correct Prayer and Dahlan's Globe

Although Ahmad Dahlan, with the help of his globe and compass, aligned the qibla of the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta in 1898 just a few decades after the *Seh Malaya* was inscribed in Surakarta in 1864 , it seems as though these two stories are ages apart, located on two sides of a gulf separating traditional Java with its enchanted, mystical worldview and poetic preoccupations from modern,

31 As cited in Chittick 1998: 92. See also Chittick 1989: 389 n. 6.

rational Java. Yet, the relation between locative and the utopian in Dahlan's reorientation of the qibla point to a dynamic of redefining the center from the vantage point of the periphery that transcends these differences in world view. Ahmad Dahlan himself was personally acquainted with both center and periphery. Born in Kauman in 1868, he was the son of a religious official of the Yogyakarta Sultanate and the Great Mosque of Kauman. As the only son, Ahmad Dahlan would later inherit his father's position. After his education in Java, first at the hands of his father and later with the great scholars and teachers (J. *kyai*) of nineteenth-century Java, he left for the Middle East in 1890 to go on the hajj and to study with Mecca's famous ulama, as many Southeast Asians did at the time. The Jawi scholars who met in the Mecca of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century became acquainted with reformist ideas and, upon arriving back home, often implemented these ideas in their own communities.[32] Ahmad Dahlan and his foundation of Muhammadiyah was thus part of a wider movement of reform. Upon returning to Yogyakarta, Dahlan at first focused on social service, organizing his friends to empower Kauman's Muslims through voluntary work (Noer 1973: 74). While in Mecca, he had moreover developed an interest in astronomy and the use of a globe for trigonometric calculations. Thus equipped, he established that from a mathematical viewpoint the qibla of the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta was incorrect.

While medieval Arab astronomers had already worked out a way to determine the direction of Mecca with considerable accuracy, it was only in the eighteenth century that it became possible to measure longitudinal differences correctly, with the result that the qibla of older mosques could be shown to be incorrect (King 1999: 161). While evidence is scarce, there are indications that around that time Islamic scientists and cartographers increasingly adopted European conventions and technologies in their maps and instruments (King 1999: 274–328; see also Rapoport 2020: 159). By the late nineteenth century, many reformers had adopted the cause of establishing the accurate direction of prayer (Laffan 2002: 49–50, 249 n.1), which sometimes entailed correcting existing practices, as was the case in Kauman.

Ahmad Dahlan's correction of the qibla was vehemently opposed by the Kauman authorities, even to the point that they demolished his prayer house. Dahlan was reportedly criticized for making use of western technologies, the technologies of the unbelievers, to calculate something as significant as the orientation during prayer. In the minds of his traditionalist critics, the epistemology of western science was incompatible with ritual performance as understood in traditional Islamic epistemology. After the controversy around

32 For more on these dynamics, see Laffan 2002.

the qibla had escalated in Yogyakarta, the authorities of Kauman decided to send Ahmad Dahlan back to Mecca in 1903; but while there, his views were likely reinforced rather than challenged. In the Hijaz, he studied with the Sumatran reformer Aḥmad Khāṭib and was exposed to a Cairene Reformism that emphasized science and rationality to fight ignorance and promote progress (Laffan 2002: 120). Indeed, with his openness to western science, Dahlan participated in a wider trend of reformism in Islam that considered European technologies and commodities not only compatible, but even potentially beneficial for Muslim belief and practice. In 1897, around the same time as Dahlan's campaign in Yogyakarta, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in Cairo founded a magazine entitled *al-Manār*, or "The Lighthouse," in which he published fatwas that explicitly endorsed the adoption of western technologies as boons to modern worshippers (see Halevi 2019). Others went even further, arguing that modern science and technology were inherently Islamic. These included Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1969) and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Qaṭlān (d. 1931), who published a journal from 1917 to 1919 titled *Salafiyya Review* (Ar. *al-Majalla al-Salafiyya*), in which they sought to introduce their readers to the religious and secular benefits and uses of the scientific insights of the pious ancestors (Ar. *salaf*) and their compatibility with modern, western scientific methodologies.[33] In Southeast Asia, other modernists who had also lived and studied in the Middle East similarly strove to determine the correct orientation during prayer by making use of the scientific innovations of the West. These included Djamil Djambek (d. 1947), who reformed the Islamic education system in his native Minangkabau; Tahir Jalaluddin (d. 1956), who studied at Cairo's al-Azhar and, as a specialist in astronomy, subsequently taught in Mecca before returning to Southeast Asia to spread Islamic reform; and the Cambodian scholar Mat Sales Haroun (d. 1950).[34]

The reorientation of the qibla, however, entailed more than having Kauman's Muslims turn a certain number of degrees when praying at the Great Mosque. By modifying the map, Ahmad Dahlan also changed what it meant to face Mecca. When we read accounts of Dahlan's initiative, the mathematical correction is often grafted onto a spiritual or moral rectification. In

33 See Lauzière 2010 for more on the intellectual commitments of Khaṭīb and Qaṭlān. According to Lauzière, these two modernists were instrumental in articulating a modernist vision of returning to the teachings of the pious ancestors (Ar. *salafiyya*), coining the contemporary understanding of Salafism.

34 See Munfaridah 2011 and Susiknan 2007: 10 for a list of Southeast Asian reformers who were committed to straightening the qibla and their relation to Ahmad Dahlan. For more on Tahir Jalaluddin, Djamil Djambek, and Mat Sales Haroun, see Ramli 1980; Abdullah 2014; and Bruckmayr 2019.

the following, I will use as an example an article published in an Indonesian journal that espouses such a view. The article's author, Imroatul Munfaridah, discusses Ahmad Dahlan's use of globe and compass as a way to set his fellow Muslims straight when praying and to address fundamental problems of the Islamic society of his day. "The Islamic *umma* had forgotten the religious requirements based on Qur'an and Hadith," Munfaridah explains. "They were deviating far from the true religious requirements" (2011: 101–02). Here, Ahmad Dahlan's straightening of the qibla is immediately related to his reform as an intervention in a spiritual crisis, a connection that can often be found in Muhammadiyah narratives telling the beginnings of the organization.[35] He had learned astronomy from traditional kyai in Java, but when he went to Mecca to go on the hajj and to deepen his knowledge, he learned to employ contemporary science that made use of the globe.[36] Mecca, constructed from Ahmad Dahlan's perspective, was no longer the Mecca of Sunan Kalijaga, whose reorientation of both the Mosque of Demak and the Kaʿba constituted Mecca as a spiritual state rather than a geographic site. Yet, Dahlan's reorientation of the qibla also complicates the relation between center and periphery. His Mecca is accessible from anywhere because its precise location can be known wherever western, modern science and gadgets are employed. Like in Sunan Kalijaga's story, the difference between center and periphery is thus undercut. This is not to say that the changes between the two stories are merely superficial. Clearly, there is a big difference between Sunan Kalijaga's Sufi metaphysics and Ahmad Dahlan's rationalism. Neither do their similarities point to an essential Javaneseness, a "culture of compromise" that can "never hope to progress."[37] Instead, I suggest that both stories show how the qibla in Islam fundamentally challenges conventional notions of periphery and center, irrespective of the wide range of meanings assigned to facing Mecca in history.

Sunan Kalijaga's phenomenal realization of Mecca gives way to a new epistemology that also claims for itself a salvific truth. As Munfaridah explains,

35 For an example of this, see Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2010: 2–3.

36 More specifically, Ahmad Dahlan's globe replaced the sine quadrant (A. *rubʿ al-mujayyab*), a device in the shape of a quarter circle that had been used by medieval Arabic astronomers. See King 1999: 16. According to Munfaridah, 2011: 107, the sine quadrant did not work in Yogyakarta because of its location below the equator and thus had to be replaced with the globe, which had not traditionally been used in spheric trigonometric calculations by Arab mathematicians. See also Susiknan 2007: 45–46 for an account of Dahlan's scientific and mathematical innovations.

37 This was one of the central critiques of Javanese culture by Indonesia's renowned writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer, as detailed by Cheah 2003.

"the paradigm that was brought by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan had the objective to straighten religion (I. *meluruskan agama*) with reference to astronomy, which is related to the pious obligation of prayer by way of the direction of the qibla" (2011: 105). Straightening the qibla is thus understood as equivalent to straightening religion as a whole, aligning it with a new scientific epistemology that maps Mecca as present wherever correct scientific methodologies were used to establish the right qibla.[38] Indeed, the correct epistemology in establishing the qibla appears to be almost more significant than the actual, physical orientation during prayer. Munfaridah's article concludes with the note that while Ahmad Dahlan significantly improved the orientation during prayer, contemporary methodologies reveal that the direction he came up with, the 24° angle, was not quite correct either: according to the software *Mawaqit*, based on the most cutting-edge contemporary astronomic data, the angle should not be 24° but 25° 11′ 0″ (2011: 108). This deviation, Munfaridah argues, was insignificant because more crucially, Ahmad Dahlan established a new epistemology about astronomy that, going forward, would enable Southeast Asian Muslims to keep developing their scientific tools and to keep improving the qibla.

While oriented toward a center, Ahmad Dahlan defied the Kauman authorities and their established qibla, designating the periphery as a site where congruity and conformity to an accepted but fallacious standard could be overcome to establish a new paradigm and a new map of Java and the world. His locative orientation toward the center could only be realized through a rebellion and reform at the periphery that constructs Mecca as accessible whenever Muslims are keeping up with scientific advancements, always reforming established orientations as necessary. In Ahmad Dahlan's new map, the distance and difference between Java and Mecca, or center and periphery, is used to transcend this distance while pointing instead to the new epistemology on which this conceptual map is based. In this new epistemology, the locative and the utopian lose their central status in defining what the map looks like, making space for modern science. When praying at a corrected angle at an old mosque in Java built before these reformist initiatives, Muslims are not just correctly oriented toward Mecca in an oddly slanted space; they also make a statement about how to know God, or to be oriented toward God.

38 Again, it is instructive to compare this notion with Florida's analysis, where the qibla in traditional Javanese literature means obedience in addition to geographical alignment. See Florida 1995: 332–37. In both cases, the right physical orientation engenders or is equivalent to a religious virtue. See also Rapoport 2020: 159–60 for a similar account of calculations of the qibla in Safavid Iran.

If Mecca is constructed at the periphery, the very center is decentered and what looked like a localized vision therefore becomes much more utopian. The locative and the utopian become inextricably connected as the meaning of a correct orientation of the center is created at the periphery. Studies conducted elsewhere in the Muslim world would be needed to show whether the Javanese cases exemplify a broader dynamic in Islam. Yet the two stories I discussed demand that we revisit our understandings of the spatial imaginaries of religions. "Map is not territory," J.Z. Smith cited Alfred Korzybski in his eponymous essay, "but maps are all we possess" (1993: 309). Sometimes, however, the two may not be as different as they seem, since maps do more than just represent the territory; in representing territory, they create it.

4 Conclusion

Mecca is in a particular place in the Arabian peninsula. But to figures as seemingly different as Sunan Kalijaga as remembered in the *Seh Malaya* narrative and Ahmad Dahlan as remembered in contemporary Muhammadiyah, this center of the Islamic world is accessible from any point once the significance of the peripheral point is grasped. In the case of Sunan Kalijaga, the peripheral point is the place where the divine that is sought in Mecca reveals itself, not through the peripheral devotee's reaching Mecca, but through their looking for it. Only upon realizing that Mecca was in some sense always already there in Java can Sunan Kalijaga travel there at will and move Mecca and Java into alignment. For Ahmad Dahlan, the peripheral point is a place where the right tools and rationality must be deployed to determine the right relationship to Mecca. Aligning the Kauman mosque with the Kaʿba presses western tools into the service of Islam and also aligns religious practice with the norm, even as it defines the norm. The significance of there and here is upheld in both sets of memories, but the distinction is also meaningfully collapsed because in both cases, the alignment occurs as much in the architecture of mosques as in the mind and body of the worshipper, whether because Sunan Kalijaga wiggles the world into place, or because Ahmad Dahlan uses a globe and compass. If the world is charted correctly, space can become a vehicle to greater truths: Mecca comes to Java. Sometimes, it seems, map can be territory after all; or at the very least, the two meet in the cartographer's imagination and the traveler's journey.

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CHAPTER 8

Words of Power and Wisdom: Credible Authorities and Reliable Sources in the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung*

Els Bogaerts

Abstract

The *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* texts relate how Sultan Agung (r. 1613–1645) in a miraculous way conquers the world, subjugating the people to the kingdom of Mataram and converting them to Islam. The texts are composed in *tĕmbang macapat*, a Javanese poetic form, and in prose. The manuscripts that have been preserved were written, copied, read/recited and listened to in Javanese aristocratic circles, mostly in Yogyakarta, in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

Composed to demonstrate the eminence of the protagonist and the glory of Mataram, the narratives of the *Sĕrat Nitik* contain ample references to oral and written sources. Islamic saints, Hindu-Buddhist deities and the Spirit Queen of the Southern Ocean support the young Agung, providing spiritual and esoteric input. Their words of power and wisdom invigorate the sultan and prepare him for kingship.

I argue that these modes of referentiality have multiple aims. They are used to build credence so as to convince the audiences of the stories of Sultan Agung's prominence, to claim the authenticity of the tales and to authorize the telling. They also demonstrate that the representation of the past in the *Sĕrat Nitik* is based on tradition, both oral and written. The analysis of the texts from the angle of 'source credibility' offers new perspectives on the presentation of seventeenth century narratives in the late nineteenth century *Sĕrat Nitik* tales.

Keywords

Sultan Agung – Mataram – religion – teaching – modes of referentiality – authoritative and credible sources – audience – place – heroic past

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1 Introduction: Let Us Tell of Mataram – *Kawarna nagri Matawis*

xxxv-1. *Ka[153]warna nagri Matawis / langkung arja kartanira / lawon seta cĕpurine / saking arjaning paradya / adoh marang durmuka*[1] */ marga adilnya sang prabu / suka wran manjing agama//*

It is told that the realm of Mataram was very prosperous, enclosed by a wall of white cotton, owing to the kingdom's welfare, removed from greediness, due to the king's sense of justice, the people were pleased to embrace Islam.[2]

xxxv-38. [160] *Murah sandhang lawan bukti / saking dil nata bin tapa / banyu mili ing danane / bangsat kabrasat dumadya / kedhĕp ngidhĕp sadaya / lumbung si Layur supĕnuh / kinarya jaga kawula//*[3]

Clothes and food were cheap, because of the righteousness of the king, son of an ascetic, his alms abounding like flowing water, the crooks successfully dispelled, all [subjects] loyal and obedient, the rice barn Layur filled to the brim, to provide for the subjects.[4]

These stanzas in a stereotypical way mark the end of one of the many stories on Sultan Agung as told in the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* texts.[5] Sultan Agung is a historic figure who ruled over the Javanese kingdom of Mataram, stretching from Central to East Java, from 1613 until 1645. Ricklefs (1998: 471) calls him "the greatest warrior king and the most powerful monarch in Java since the fourteenth century." In historical sources the sultan is described as a wise, knowledgeable, severe, and pious person.[6] Sultan Agung's exploits feature elaborately in particular texts that were written at the Central Javanese court

1 Since other versions of the text give either *adoh marang ing murka* (e.g., Cod. Or. 10.841) or *adoh marang kamurkan* (W.55), I prefer to translate *adoh marang durmuka* with "removed from greediness."

2 [https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22595926.v1] I would like to thank Yosephin Apriastuti Rahayu for the (*tĕmbang*) performance of this stanza, and for her valuable suggestions for the interpretation of some obscure passages in the text.

3 Cod. Or. 6489a Canto xxxv: Asmaradana (38 stanzas). xxxv-1 = Canto xxxv stanza 1; [153] = page 153 in the manuscript.

4 In my English translation of the Javanese text fragments, I have not strictly adhered to the formal structure of the stanzas being characteristic of the *macapat* meter; hence I have not kept the verse line division of the Javanese original in my translation.

5 From paragraph 3 onwards referred to as *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* (the title of the text I use in this article) or *Nitik* tales or narratives. On the meaning of *nitik*, see Bogaerts 1990: 41–47; 2021: 642.

6 See De Graaf 1958 and Ricklefs 1998, who refer to contemporary sources to describe the sultan's features, character, and reputation.

of Yogyakarta and called *Sĕrat* or *Babad Nitik Sultan Agung*, one of which is explored in this article.

The stanzas mentioned above demonstrate that due to the king's justice, Mataram achieved a state of welfare. Following Javanese conventions, the storyteller presents the readers and listeners with the image of an overall prosperous country, where the citizens – due to the endless flow of royal gifts – are enjoying an abundance of food and clothing and choose to abandon their original religion in order to embrace Islam. The criminals have been banished from the realm and everybody is living a peaceful life.[7] Sultan Agung is presented as an ideal sovereign who creates an ideal world for his subjects. Their prosperity and conversion to Islam, and the peace and order of the realm, confirm the ruler's authority and power.[8] This motif is frequently repeated throughout the *Nitik* narratives as a kind of mantra, emphasizing Sultan Agung's qualities and his political, religious, and cultural status that leads to Mataram's welfare. From this we may conclude that the stories in the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* are narrated in such a way as to demonstrate the eminence of the protagonist.

Repetition is one of the stylistic devices of the narrators, confirming the sultan's glory to the audiences of the stories. The storytellers in the various texts repeatedly mention epithets that refer to Sultan Agung's physical and inner qualities, his title, his impressive knowledge, and his converting activities. In formulaic expressions, they recall the crown prince's divine predestination, the blessings he received from the gods, and the Islamic faith he devotes himself to. Other rhetorical devices are the use of similes to picture the sultan's resemblance to quranic figures and Hindu-Buddhist deities; the use of direct speech when presenting teachings and instructions; and appeals to the emotions of the audiences. One specific persuasive device to achieve this aim is source credibility. Both on the level of the narrative and the meta-narrative, the presentation of sources that possess authority, trustworthiness, or other attributes may have an impact on the audiences and establish credibility (Pratkanis and Aronson 2001: 51).[9] The main protagonist receives knowledge and direction from authoritative figures, whereas the storyteller provides knowledge by making references to authoritative sources.

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7 The stereotypical description of Mataram's welfare in these stanzas does not comply with Ricklefs' conclusions about the sultan, based on historical research (Ricklefs 1983: 41–42). See also Anderson (1990: 203).

8 The *kandha*, the introductory narrative of *wayang kulit* plays, presents a similar image (Moertono 1981: 38).

9 On Source Credibility Theory, see also Pratkanis and Gliner 2004–2005; Jowett and O'Donnell 2019.

I argue that these modes of referentiality have multiple aims. They are used to build credence so as to convince the audiences of the stories of Sultan Agung's prominence, to claim the authenticity of the tales, and to authorize their telling. They also demonstrate that the representation of the past in the *Sĕrat Nitik* is based on tradition, both oral and written. Proximity, both historical and cultural, may enhance credibility. As is the case with those who watch *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet shows) and *kĕthoprak* (popular Javanese drama), the audiences of the Sultan Agung tales most possibly were and still are familiar with the stories and their epistemologies, the characters, the scenes, and the settings.[10] This leads to a different kind of attention and a different way of listening than applied when hearing new stories.

2 Javanese Kingship, Power, and Wisdom

The Javanese stanzas mentioned at the beginning of this essay disclose ideas regarding Javanese kingship and the concepts of power and wisdom. Fertility, prosperity, stability, and glory are the qualities that pertain to Sultan Agung's kingdom. They are the social signs of the concentration of the sultan's power (Anderson 1990: 32–33, referring to Moertono 1981).

Ideas on power are culturally determined and hence should be viewed and defined within the epistemological context in which they occur and are used.[11] The Javanese concept of power in relation to kingship has been studied quite elaborately over the years.[12] Royal authority, then, is of divine origin and nature (Moertono 1981: 2 ff.; Behrend 1993: 414; Ras 1994b; Ras 2001). To achieve excellence and obtain supernatural force, a king acquires power by means of ascetism (Anderson 1990: 28) and by receiving powerful tokens, admonitions, and objects from authoritative figures. The construction or mastery of a *kraton* and patronage of the arts augment his royal status (Behrend 1993: 414). Moertono (1981: 14–82) gives an extensive analysis of "the magical

10 On intermediality and familiarity, see Bogaerts 2016: 497–500.

11 Cf. Anderson 1990: 19–20 n. 8.

12 See Moertono's evaluation of the work of Schrieke and De Graaf (Moertono 1981: 8–9). Moertono also builds on and criticizes the work of Pigeaud (several years). See further Koentjaraningrat 1980; Ras 1994; Ras 2001. Anderson's study on language and power (1990) needs to be mentioned here, as well as Ricklefs (1974; also Ricklefs 1998). Behrend (1989) writes about the cosmic significance of the kraton. In his topographies of power, focusing on the management of power in Banyuwangi, East Java, during the Soeharto era, Beatty (2012: 173–74) builds on the work of the predecessors mentioned here.

and religious implementation of kingship," including the characteristics of the ideal king. These are stereotypical and also feature prominently in the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung*, as demonstrated in this chapter. Power is very closely connected to locus: Sultan Agung's power is intertwined with his realm Mataram. Mecca, Istanbul (*Stambul*)[13] and the Ottoman Empire (*Rum*), then, are spaces of power that sanction the sultan's position and authority because of their role as centers of Islam. At present, the aura of Mataram still radiates on the central Javanese kingdoms through their dynastic link with Mataram.

Erudition and esoteric knowledge (*ngelmu*) are other aspects of power in the context of the Javanese kingdom. Moertono (1981: 41) defines the king's *kawicaksanan* as "a rare and highly esteemed capacity, which not only endowed the holder with the widest possible range of knowledge but also the deepest awareness of realities and a sense of justice." The word *wicaksana* encompasses a wide range of meanings, from highly excellent, wise, experienced, skillful and intelligent to learned and having a clear insight (Moertono 1981: 41). A Javanese king should seek divine guidance in order to be endowed with wisdom – the term I use here to cover the wide meaning of wicaksana.

In this chapter, I examine how credible and reliable sources convey words of power and wisdom to the crown prince before his enthronement as Sultan Agung. To that aim, I identify the main messengers of powerful and wise words, their messages, and how they are conveyed. I use brief parts of the narratives to exemplify the workings of informative and persuasive rhetorical devices. They demonstrate the intricate relationships between the protagonists and the impact of their interaction. In the concluding remarks, I will cast some light on the audiences of the texts.

Before throwing light on these words of power and wisdom, I will briefly introduce the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* corpus.

3 The Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung Corpus

Sultan Agung, who ruled over the Javanese kingdom of Mataram from 1613 until 1645,[14] has lived on in the collective memory of the Javanese until now and is considered a national hero of Indonesia. The painter Sudjojono immortalized his battle with Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Governor-General of the Dutch

13 In the period 1873–1876, when the original *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* manuscript was composed or copied, still called Constantinople by Europeans.

14 1646, according to Ricklefs 1998: 470.

FIGURE 8.1 S. Sudjojono, *The Battle between Sultan Agung and JP Coen*, 1973. Oil on canvas
JAKARTA HISTORY MUSEUM

East India Company (VOC) in a triptych (Figure 8.1). The sultan's meeting with the Queen of the Southern Ocean is represented in a sacred *bědhaya* dance of the Yogyakarta court.[15] Sultan Agung figures as a protagonist in popular drama on radio and television (*kěthoprak*) and in novels and movies (Figure 8.2). The sultan's burial place at Imagiri has become an important site of pilgrimage. The *Sěrat* (or *Babad*) (*Pa*)*Nitik Sultan Agung*(*an*) texts are part of this storytelling tradition.

These *Nitik* tales recount the adventures of Sultan Agung. They investigate (*nitik*) how Sultan Agung – a man of esoteric knowledge and divine power, and of letters and the performing arts – in a miraculous way subjects the surrounding world to Mataram and converts its inhabitants to Islam. In the stories, which belong to both written and oral traditions, and to court and folk tales, we are told how gods from the upperworld and forces from the underworld assist and support him. They tell the history of Mataram from a much later Javanese perspective. Also, they are meant to instruct the readers and listeners and to set an example.

15 *Bědhaya* is a female court dance; see Brakel-Papenhuijzen 1992 and Suharti 2015. The *Bědhaya Lambangsari* was performed at the Yogyakarta Kraton during the Uyon-Uyon Hadiluhung performance on December 28, 2020. In the kandha, the spoken introduction to the work (a creation of Sultan HB VII which was developed by Sultan HB VIII), and also at the official site of the Kraton, reference was made to the *Sěrat Babad Nitik* as the source of this bědhaya. The dance depicts, however, the meeting of Paněmbahan Senapati with Kangjeng Ratu Kidul. See https://www.kratonjogja.id/peristiwa/129/uyon-uyon-hadiluhung-senin-pon-28-desember-2020 [last accessed January 2022]. This example demonstrates how stories about the relationship between Paněmbahan Senapati and Sultan Agung with Ratu Kidul are still part and parcel of the Javanese oral repertoire. It also shows that stories about Paněmbahan Senapati and Sultan Agung in Javanese literary tradition tend to be interchangeable (see Bogaerts 1990: 42–43).

FIGURE 8.2
Poster of Hanung Bramantyo's *Sultan Agung: Tahta, perjuangan, cinta* (2018) (Sultan Agung: Throne, struggles, love)
PIKIRAN RAKYAT, AUGUST 23, 2018

Borrowing a view from Mitchell (1994: 105) as presented in his *Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, I suggest the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* texts display "a radically heterogeneous representation of history." The tales rest on multiple historical layers. Among others, there is the historical context of the tale and the historical context of the telling. The historical context of the tale concerns the first half of the seventeenth century, the tale being: Sultan Agung's life and deeds, his acquisition of power and wisdom, and his confrontation with people from overseas/foreigners, the Dutch in particular. As the manuscripts I have been studying all date from the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the historical context of the telling concerns that period, the tale being: Yogyakarta and the foreigners. But also, the provenance of the work and the contemporary context of the Yogyakarta court circles where the manuscripts were written and copied, recited and listened to contribute to the historical context of the telling. The tales as created by the storytellers and following the logic and constraints of the narrative also contain stories about the ease with which the sultan spreads Islam, the meetings with his forefathers and his passionate love for the Queen of the Southern Ocean. The voices of the storytellers, presenting the tales in a vivid, visual, and poetic language, and representing the conceptual worlds and voices of (and the interaction between) the actors belonging to different ideological and historical realms and their use of direct speech, create an "illusion of oral immediacy" (a term used by Mitchell 1994: 105). This illusion is also evoked by the storyteller's references to oral sources. Pigeaud calls the stories "rather novelistic" (1967: 88),[16] but I would suggest that the telling in the *Nitik tales* resembles the narrative aesthetics of theater (and even film, *avant la lettre*).

16 "as a rule not didactic, but rather novelistic" (Pigeaud 1967: 88). Pigeaud's first claim ("as a rule not didactic") is very questionable, as I have demonstrated in this chapter and in Bogaerts 2021.

The *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung* texts belong to a storytelling repertoire which is perceived to be characteristic of Yogyakarta – only a few texts originated in Surakarta – and hence show a specific regional particularity.[17] Simultaneously, they share stories and motifs with other Javanese and Malay textual traditions. They were used at the court and circulated among nobility.

Most *Nitik* tales are composed in the macapat meter, a Javanese poetic form,[18] while some are written in prose. Viewing them as performative art touches upon vocality and the aural aspects which are inherent to the tĕmbang macapat: the written texts are tailored to be performed orally in a specific style for an audience and to be heard and listened to. Therefore, they only obtain and reveal their full meaning if vocalized/sung. Vocalizing the metrical texts guides the reader in reading the text. Or, as Finnegan (2005: 177), writing on the concept of performance literature, puts it, the performance is *in* the text, meaning a text "may carry the sonic echoes of a sung acoustic performance." Besides, "public oral delivery"[19] of the tĕmbang macapat texts leads to a literary experience which for both the "reader" and the audience differs from private silent reading.

As a corpus, the *Nitik Sultan Agung* texts are multivocal. They have an open structure and accommodate a range of narratives, all centering around Sultan Agung as the principal protagonist.[20] They combine an array of scenes with the corresponding moods: court scenes, instructions (on kingship, on being a good Muslim and the benefits of it), *piwulang* (didactic moralistic instructions),[21] the quest for secret knowledge, tales of origin (of specific places, of royal heirlooms), everyday life, love scenes, meetings and confrontations with foreigners (reflecting Mataram's position in an international trade network), conversion and battle scenes, and humoristic sequences. They present glimpses of, or detailed insights into, Javanese court culture, including ceremonies, rituals, literature, and performances. Each type of scene evokes a particular mood, which can be serious, solemn, sad, humorous, dramatic and fierce, romantic, religious, spiritual or instructive.

Due to the open structure of the texts, the contents of this *Nitik* corpus show a great variety. I have based my present analysis on Cod. Or. 6489a, a

17 See Behrend 1993: 410, on the need to generate "a far more detailed and regionally particularistic picture of Javanese literary history."

18 On the poetics of tĕmbang macapat, see Ras 1994a: 308–37; Arps 1992.

19 This is a term Finnegan (2005: 167) uses.

20 On *Nitik* as a genre, see Riyadi 1980, 1984, 2011; Bogaerts 1990: 41–47; Wieringa 1993.

21 See Bogaerts 2021.

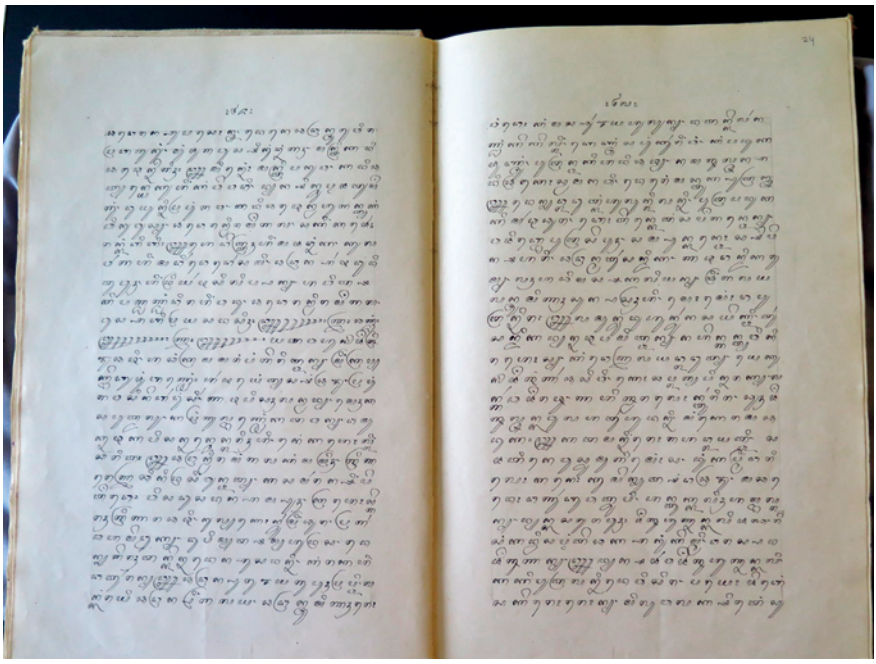

FIGURE 8.3 *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*
LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, COD. OR. 6489A, CANTO IX, STANZAS 1–7

manuscript kept at the Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries, entitled *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* (Figure 8.3).[22]

In the recension, as found in this and related texts, we follow the development of the protagonist from crown prince to the invincible Sultan Agung. Surrounding countries surrender themselves of their own volition and embrace Islam. The texts emphasize how under Sultan Agung's rule Mataram is prosperous and peaceful. The possession of royal heirlooms contributes to the special qualities a king should have. Hence, we witness how Agung creates royal entertainment in the form of sacred dance and music, and how he plants the first rice and coconut trees. Another recension, as contained in Cod. Or. 6476 and related texts, presents a similar image of the sultan. Upon the

22 The Leiden University Library manuscript Cod. Or. 6489a belongs to the Hazeu Collection of 1931. Entitled *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*, it is written in verse in Javanese script by Pangeran Arya Candra Nagara of Yogyakarta, and dated 1838 AJ (1908 CE). It consists of 37 cantos. Except for the colophon, the text of this manuscript is very closely related to the oldest existing manuscript found so far, the Sonobudoyo MSB S57, written between 19 July 1873 and 16 July 1876 (see Behrend 1990: 30–31).

arrival of the *tiyang sabrang*, the English, Chinese, Dutch and other foreigners from overseas (Turks and Abyssinians, for instance), the equilibrium is disturbed and slowly but surely the tide is turning. Although Mataram sends support to Jakarta, eventually the Dutch occupy the city. A Javanese-Dutch marital bond legitimizes the foreigners' presence in Java. There is a partial overlap between the two recensions.[23]

4 Words of Power and Wisdom

Before reigning over Mataram as Sultan Agung, the crown prince leaves the kingdom and – like a wandering Muslim student (*santri lělana*)[24] – roams around to behold the secrets of the Ruler of the World. Meditation and teachings help him to grasp the meaning of the secret knowledge and to achieve supernatural power, *kasěkten*.[25] The spiritual and esoteric input of gods, saints, and ancestors provide the royal authority in Mataram with "the religious and supernatural props of legitimation" (Ricklefs 1974: 23).[26] Canto after canto we witness how his father, Islamic saints, Hindu-Buddhist deities and the Spirit Queen of the Southern Ocean bestow spiritual and esoteric gifts on the young crown prince. As authoritative and credible sources, their words of power and wisdom, conveyed in dreams, prophecies, teachings, and magic spells, invigorate the future sultan and prepare him for kingship. The circumstances in which these words of power and wisdom are passed on are described in detail.

Sultan Agung is predestined to attain supreme rule. This twofold divine predestination is a very powerful source of authority. From the Islamic side, the legitimization of Agung's kingship is quite overwhelming, while representatives of the right line of royal descent, the Muslim *garis panĕngĕn*, endorse him.[27] We learn that God had the star of royal destiny, *pulung irhas*, descend upon him and entrusted him with the spreading of Islam on Java. Thus, he

23 Bogaerts (1990: 48–52) gives an overview of the related texts that are kept in the Leiden University Libraries. A digital overview and description of all registered *Nitik* manuscripts is under construction.

24 Tony Day's chapter on the *Sĕrat Cĕnthini* explores the concept of the santri lělana elaborately.

25 Also called: sěkti.

26 Ricklefs refers here to the study of Soemarsaid Moertono in which he distinguishes between "the magical and religious implementation of kingship" and "the technical implementation of kingship" (see Moertono 1981).

27 Javanese kings trace their origins back to Adam. The left dynastic line (garis pangiwa) follows the genealogy of the Hindu-Buddhist deities and their descendants, to begin with the supreme God Bathara Guru or Shiva; the right line of descent (garis panĕngĕn)

becomes the Prophet's favorite (XII-46). When called Kalipatollah, he is considered God's representative (caliph) on earth.[28] Besides, because of his radiant glow and splendor, Sultan Agung is compared to the prophets Joseph (Nabi Yusup, V-30–31) and Solomon (Nabi Suleman, XII-10), two quranic figures who developed into well-known Islamic legendary personages, as they feature in the Javanese Ambiya tradition (see chapter 6) and elsewhere. With similes as literary devices, the physical beauty and special qualities of these famous figures are assigned to Sultan Agung. On the other hand, the narrator informs us that the regular intervention of Hindu-Buddhist deities strengthens Agung's position as well. Hence, the supreme god Bathara Guru himself arranges for Sultan Agung to meet his future spirit queen (IV-30 ff.). The five Pandhawa brothers, sons of King Pandhu and Dewi Kunthi and main characters in the Javanese Mahabharata epic,[29] and representatives of the left dynastic line (*garis pangiwa*), provide him with magic formulae, *aji*, that enhance the sultan's power and knowledge (XXI ff.). Again, by means of similes, the sultan acquires the charisma of the Hindu-Buddhist deities. He is described as an exceptional human being, an incarnation of the god Wisnu (V-7), and is said to resemble both the love god Hyang Asmara (V-31) and Bathara Guru on his throne (XII-10; XII-46). Sultan Agung's position as Bathara Guru and as Kalipatollah are references to the Hindu-Buddhist concept of the *devaraja*, the divine king, and the Islamic concept of God's representative on earth. The storyteller of the late nineteenth century *Nitik* narrative (as contained in the 1908 copy) combined both concepts to demonstrate Agung's status. A third aspect that enhances Agung's position and might is his bond with and the support he receives from the indigenous Queen of the Southern Ocean, Ratu Kidul. Ricklefs (this volume) calls this coming together of three spheres of belief a "mystic synthesis" and concludes that it "seems to have been the dominant mode of Islamic religiosity among Javanese by the late 18th and early 19th centuries." The examples in this chapter demonstrate, however, how intricately linked to each other these three spheres of belief still were in late nineteenth-century Javanese macapat poetry and the world views it represents.

Those who contribute to the crown prince's development towards kingship and Sultan Agung's acquisition of power and wisdom all have their proper roles and functions. Also, each of them is linked to a specific locus. In the

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follows the Muslim lineage, to begin with the Prophet Muhammad. See Moertono 1981: 63–64; Florida 1995: 267; Wieringa 1999; Arps 2019.

28 When he receives his title in Ratu Kidul's palace (V-8 and 9; see below).

29 They become engaged in a conflict with the Kurawa, their one hundred nephews, which leads to the Bratayudha war.

following section, I dwell on the crown prince's father, and on Sunan Kalijaga, the Pandhawa brothers, Ratu Kidul and The One in Disguise as main sources of powerful and wise words in the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*.

5 King Anyakrawati: "Only You, My Son, Deserve to Become the King of Java"[30]

The first words of power and wisdom that are bestowed on the crown prince are those of his father, King Anyakrawati.[31] Teaching him how to be a just and virtuous ruler, his father's instructions on statesmanship prepare the crown prince for kingship.

The two introductory stanzas and the final two stanzas of the first canto frame the entire narrative: the storyteller introduces Sultan Agung from Karta, known to be excellent (*dibya*) and in the possession of supernatural powers (sĕkti), and confirms the qualities a new king should have: endorsement from a religious side of the divine origin of kingship, and invincibility. A suitable and strong pedigree is another requirement (Moertono 1981: 62–63; Ras 1994b: 523–26, 534–35). Beside the brief genealogical information that focuses on the origin of the crown prince and his siblings (I-7–16), the king's father emphasizes the crown prince's link to his great ancestor Senapati (I-28).

The story goes as follows: It is told that the second ruler of Mataram, King Anyakrawati, summoned his son to appear before him because he wanted to explain to him everything about the government of the land. His Majesty *paring sabda*, that is he addresses his son-the-crown-prince as a father and king, solemn, wise, and higher in rank, granting him powerful words and teaching him the rules of royal conduct, so as to lend the kingdom prosperity.[32] To be an excellent king, he should carry out the duties and responsibilities that come with the position and rank, and act accordingly.

30 *mung sira putraningsun / ingkang madĕg sultan Matawis* (I-29).

31 Ruler of the world. See footnote 50 on Anyakrakusuma.

32 *Mrih mulyaning kanang rat* (I-17). In the same way, at the time of writing, Sri Sultan HB X of Yogyakarta regularly conveyed his wise words (*sabda*) to the people of the Special Region of Yogyakarta by means of social media, his messages spoken in Javanese, solemn and wise, instructing the people to keep to the Covid-19 regulations – for their own safety and the well-being of the community.

The first advice concerns the relationship with the army, the cornerstone of the realm. For a sound government, a king should skillfully win the favor of the soldiers, his generosity must be unstinting. To make the army dedicated and faithful, he should spread far and wide his fragrant and sweet words. Finally, the king advises his son not to hurt the feelings of the subjects; his reign should be endowed with wisdom (kawicaksanan) (I-18). Then follow instructions about the qualities a good king is expected to have: careful, clear and steadfast in his conduct should he be, sharing his knowledge about virtue, with excellence as his aim (I-19, 20). A significant part of the teaching is dedicated to spiritual matters that include refined behavior, a firm hold on religion, a proficient performance of the religious duties and a mastering of all that concerns *darma* (obligations and duty) (I-20).[33] An outstanding person, he will receive the blessings of the afterlife (I-21, 22). King Anyakrawati elaborates on the worldly position of the monarch as the "nail of the universe" and on how difficult it is to act as a virtuous king (I-24), and on his spiritual position as representative of the Apostle (I-25). To perform the latter, he should follow the Prophet as an example, since the Apostle of God is the representative of the One who Ordains All (I-24, 25).

The king continues that Islam is the final religion until the Day of Judgement (I-27) and summons his son to spread it throughout Mataram. Also, he requests him to guard and appreciate the merits of his late grandfather, Paněmbahan Senapati, who founded Mataram (I-28). Weakening his own role, his final words are:

I-29. *Ingsun iki manggih kutha bĕcik / neng Mataram kaki durung kĕna / yen ingsun juměněng rojeng / mung sira putraningsun / ingkang madĕg sultan Matawis / nutukkĕn ing laksita / rat Jawa kawĕngku / poma-poma atmajeng-wang / dipun engĕt sajarwaningsun ta kaki / wran anom kang pratama //*

29. In Mataram I found a fine city, my dear, but I was not yet allowed to reign as a king. Only you, my son, deserve to become the king of Java, to sustain the rule over Java. By all means, my son, remember all I have explained, my dear, you splendid young person.

33 "Darma is usually translated *duty*, a word that has unfortunate Christian overtones. It is really a caste or status-obligation: Being a satria, one acts as a satria. In a more general sense, it has some of the connotations of *justice*" (Anderson 1990: 52 n. 75).

Reflecting on the event, the storyteller concludes: "Thus the king finished his teachings to the crown prince, truly a splendid young man, for the esteem of Java. It corresponded to how the king's father, Paněmbahan Senapati, had spoken" (11-1, 2).

In this scene, King Anyakrawati initiates the crown prince into the duties and responsibilities of a king, the third in the line of the Mataram dynasty. To be a successful monarch it was essential "to behave in what was recognized as a kingly fashion" (Ricklefs 1974: 14–15). Supreme qualities and conduct, duties and responsibilities, relations with the army, the genealogical ties with the past (and the founding of the Mataram dynasty) and the continuity of the realm, worldly and religious positions, and in particular the urgency of darma and of religion – the king's teaching brings to mind similar instructions in the wayang kulit the audiences would be familiar with and is an example of cultural proximity. The strong rhetoric of the king's instructions and the use of direct speech reinforce the persuasive character of his words. The fact that we hear the king's voice directly, not by means of the narrator, boosts the veracity and power of his messages. Another rhetorical device is the arousal of emotions, both towards the crown prince and towards the audiences. During the teaching, the monarch addresses his son, calling on him to "obey my words" (*estokna ujaringsun*); "this is something you need to remember, my dear" (*kaki sira engĕta*); "day and night I demand" (*sun pĕpinta siyang myang ratri*); "by all means, my son, remember all I have explained my dear, you splendid young person."[34] His use of affectionate terms like "my son" (*sutengsun*), "young man" (*kaki* or *kaki putra*), "my child" (*atmajaningwang*) and "my beloved son" (*nyawa atmajengwang*), sometimes combined with the interjection (*a*)*dhuh* to express his deep affection and tenderness (oh my beloved son, *dhuh nyawa atmajengwang*), strengthens the king's appeal to his son, increases the crown prince's involvement in the event (although the crown prince himself does not speak a word) and is touching at the same time – a rhetorical device of the narrator to address the listeners' feelings.

Anyakrawati's teaching echoes mirrors for princes, and it reminds us of other instances in Javanese literature and culture that display instructions about kingship, in particular of the Astabrata, the *Eight Rules of Life*. The present instruction, however, differs much from Rama's lessons to Wibisana, although it contains comparable moral guidelines.[35] Another instance of an

34 For the Javanese original, see the example above (1-29).

35 See van der Molen 2015: 529–31 and Robson 2015: 649–51 for the Astabrata in the Old Javanese Ramayana. Wieringa 2018 focuses on later versions of the *Eight Rules of Life* from the Pakualaman court.

admonition to the king is to be found in the *Suluk Garwa Kancana*, which, according to Ricklefs (1998: 479) demonstrates Sultan Agung's effort to reconcile Javanese and Islamic identities.

6 Sunan Kalijaga: "Know, Young Man, That You Have Received the Love of God"[36]

Now that his father has enlightened him on leadership, the crown prince is ready to receive words of power and wisdom from other influential sources.

The first new protagonist the narrator introduces is Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine *wali* (the saints who, according to tradition, introduced and spread Islam on Java), who arrives all of a sudden as a result of the crown prince's meditative practice, while praying to become an esteemed man. In his first visit to the sultan, Sunan Kalijaga announces the divine support of his kingship. The storyteller narrates the news that had spread over the world about the qualities of the king's son and the blessings he had received, blessings for Java. The divine star of royal destiny had fallen on him, the god Siwa had blessed his meditation, as if he had become the meditating Wisnu, and the Law of the Apostle, the *sarengat*, and prophethood, the *cahya nurbuwat*, had been passed down to him (11-3–5). This all happened in conformity to Sunan Kalijaga's prophecy to the crown prince's grandfather, Senapati of Mataram, that the pre-Islamic belief of *Buda* and *Islam* would intertwine and come down on his grandson (11-6). The revelation that he will be the king of Java also applies to his descendants:

11-8. *Jěng su*[*9*]*nan Kali ngandika / wruhanira jěbeng iki / pasiyanira Hyang Suksma / wus dhumawuh sira yěkti / lan kita sinung ugi / panjing ing ngelmu jěng Rasul / kraton saturunira / kang ngrěnggani tanah Jawi /* [...] //

8. Sunan Kalijaga told him: "You should know, young man, that you have received the love of the Immaterial God and have been allowed to apprehend the secret doctrine of the Prophet, and that you and your descendants will rule over Java."

36 *Wruhanira jěbeng iki, pasiyanira Hyang Suksma wus dhumawuh sira yěkti* (Cod. Or. 6489a 11-9). Hyang Suksma: one of the names of Bathara Guru, the supreme God (Gericke and Roorda 1901, 1: 790).

And so it happened – says the storyteller – that at dawn the incarnation of the kingship coincided indeed with his conversion to Islam; they were said to belong together as a keris and its sheath. Truly right and proper it was (II-9).[37] The crown prince leaves the place of inauguration, visits the abode of Bathara Guru and swiftly disappears, flying to all corners of the world (II-11, 12).

Sunan Kalijaga is a superstar, according to Behrend (1987: 349–50) and he is "accomplished in all fields of knowledge" (Warsadiningrat 1987: 55). Quinn states that he "is an embodiment of Javanese Islam and his life story parallels the evolution of Islam in Java" (2019: 50). A wali of Javanese descent, he is "most associated with the history of the Mataram dynasty" (Ricklefs 2006: 210) and has a prominent role in the court chronicle (*Babad Tanah Jawi*), in particular in relation to Senapati (Ricklefs 1974), and in other Javanese literature. He is remembered for "his quintessential Javaneseness" (Florida 1995: 329). Meyer (this volume) elaborates on the narrative traditions of Sunan Kalijaga,[38] whereas Ricci (this volume), in her discussion of the echoes between the prophets' biographies and those of the Javanese walis, calls the sunan "a foundational father figure." In the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*, Sunan Kalijaga acts as an adviser to the sultan. He is an envoy of the Islamic realm, a seer and prophet, a mediator, and a spiritual teacher. According to the storyteller, he is the sunan who used to have his residence in Kadilangu (XXI-3).[39] At the time of the telling he has been released from the physical world (*mukswa*), but he is still roaming around the world and meeting with the one who is practising ascesis, that is, the sultan (XXI-3).

Sunan Kalijaga spreads Islam over Java, which Sultan Agung also does in the *Nitik* stories. In this respect the sultan can be compared to Sunan Kalijaga – he is perceived as the protector of Islam since Allah had entrusted him with the spreading of the holy religion (IV-4). His charismatic presence brings people to remove wooden idols, cease worshipping heaven and earth and study the contents of the Quran (IV-5). Fighting the old religion, the crown prince (later Sultan Agung) becomes the favorite of the Prophet and accedes to the doctrine that had been revealed to the Arabs (IV-7). Another activity that Sultan Agung and Sunan Kalijaga have in common is the creation and patronage

37 Literally: like a sheath into which the keris enters: *Samana ing wanci pajar / titising kratyan marĕngi / lan pasuk ing gama Islam / wrangka curiganya manjing / pantĕs pinatut yĕkti* (II-9).

38 Quinn 2019 presents still other narrative traditions.

39 His holy grave in Kadilangu, which is close to Dĕmak in Central Java, has become a favorite pilgrimage site.

of performing art genres. An example is the *Gamĕlan Sĕkaten*, which Sunan Kalijaga created to capture the hearts of the Javanese people (Warsadiningrat 1987: 55), whereas Sultan Agung created this gamĕlan when he was enraptured by the sounds of nature in Ratu Kidul's pleasure-garden (IV–V).

As a seer and prophet, the sunan is a strong support for the Mataram kings.[40] When Sultan Agung meditates (*tapa; mĕrĕs cipta*) or prays (*maca donga nurbuwat*),[41] Sunan Kalijaga arrives immediately. Called the Great Sage (Sang Maha Moni), he is aware of Sultan Agung's inner thoughts and wishes. At crucial moments, he guides the sultan in religious and spiritual matters and in matters of love and kingship, opening his eyes, mind, and heart. Foretelling the future, he acts as a prophet. But he is also present in times of sadness and sorrow, when he consoles the persons concerned. This happens for instance when ruling king Anyakrawati is mortally wounded during a game hunt. After Sultan Agung and Ratu Kidul have honored him and the king has spoken his last words to them while subduing his pain, Sunan Kalijaga points him to the wide open gates of heaven. The king reads the Islamic profession of faith (*syahadah*) and praises the Lord in his prayers (IX-11), then passes away, accompanied by heavy rain and a stormy wind. That both Sunan Kalijaga and Ratu Kidul are present in Prabu Anyakrawati's last hours is proof of the importance of both figures for the realm of Mataram and its history. Also important is that her father-in-law acknowledges Ratu Kidul to be the crown prince's official spouse.

Another major feature of Sunan Kalijaga is his concern with the welfare of Mataram. In this respect, he – together with Ratu Kidul – is linked to a myth of origin. From the final canto we learn that the sunan instructs Sultan Agung (*wĕlingira sunan Lepen*; XXXV-15) to fetch rice grains from Champa (*Cĕmpa*) and to sow them in order to provide for the Javanese. The rice is of such a high quality that it is suited to be made a royal delicacy (*Pantĕs dadya langĕn aji*; XXXV-22). After having distributed the grains among the bystanders who admired its beautiful shape, Sultan Agung retreats to the place of worship where Ratu Kidul appears before him. She proposes to clear the forest of Pamancingan (V-29).[42] The sultan agrees, and orders his royal servants to do so and build the rice barn (*lumbung*) Layur. The first rice and the first coconuts are then planted (XXXV-31–33).

40 The title of Sunan, meaning "he who is revered," was originally used for the Islamic saints (wali) only. Since the eighteenth century, rulers of the Mataram dynasty have adopted the title. See Florida 1995: 95.

41 *Donga nurbuwat*: the prayer of kingship.

42 Pamancingan is a place close to the entrance of Ratu Kidul's underwater palace.

7 Ratu Kidul: "Now the Excellent One [...] Will Assume the Royal Title"[43]

Divine predestination is the origin of Sultan Agung's kingship. Since the crown prince needs access to yet another source of power before he becomes the sultan of Mataram, therefore his bond with the spirit world and its Queen of the Southern Ocean, Ratu Kidul, has been predestined too.

When the crown prince needs to secure the support of Ratu Kidul, the scene leading to their first meeting and their eventual union is recalled in detail. Firstly, the divine envoy Hyang Kaneka[44] whispers the secret revelation to Ratu Kidul that her time to wed has come.[45] Secondly, Sunan Kalijaga appears as intermediary between the crown prince and Ratu Kidul, revealing that their wedding is predestined (IV-8–24). He says with a smile that the sun and the moon will act as the wali,[46] and he will be the witness (*nĕkseni*) (IV-24). In this function, the sunan may remind us of the figure of Nabi Khadir (Ar. al-Khiḍr) who in the *Sejarah Melayu* acts as wali during the wedding ceremony of King Iskandar Zulkarnain (Ar. Dhū l-Qarnayn) and the princess of Kida Hindi (Ras 1968: 84). As Nabi Khadir (or Khidr), Sunan Kalijaga – the sunan who guards the river – is associated with the element "water."[47] It is the water that connects Sunan Kalijaga to Ratu Kidul and that may be the reason why in the *Nitik* tales these two characters frequently make their appearance jointly to support the crown prince/sultan.

Thirdly, the narrator introduces charismatic ancestors of the left dynastic line, whom the audiences would be very familiar with. In cooperation with the supreme Hindu-Buddhist god Bathara Guru, Sunan Kalijaga then prepares the crown prince and Ratu Kidul for the coming union. When the god and goddess of love enter their bodies, they become very much attracted to each other. Deeply in love, they go to Ratu Kidul's underwater palace (IV-62 ff.).

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43 *Ing mangke sang sudibya / raja putra ing Matarum / sisilih nami narendra* (V-8).

44 In some instances, reference is made to Hyang Kanekaputra, Hyang Kaneka's son, better known as Bathara Narada. In Canto IV the names Narada and Hyang Kaneka are used alternately. Also: Rĕsi Kaneka.

45 *Sung wangsit / yen kinen akrami / wus mangsane iku* (Cod. Or. 6489a III-6).

46 Guardian to the bride (another meaning of the word 'wali').

47 Meyer (this volume) explains the origin of Sunan Kalijaga's name. On Iskandar tales, see Ricklefs and Arps (both this volume).

As Ras (1986: 266) points out, the ruler's alliance with Ratu Kidul represents

> the story of the union of the founder of the dynasty with the princess ruling the waters and the Underworld. This is the central theme of the ancient Indonesian myth of origin found in many variations in texts concerned with the mythic past.

While Ras refers here to Senapati's marriage to the Queen of the Southern Ocean, the same holds for Sultan Agung's bond with Ratu Kidul and her bond with all future kings of Java. This is an instance of the correspondence between Panĕmbahan Senapati and Sultan Agung in Javanese literary tradition. Also, the events preceding the wedding of the crown prince with the Queen of the Southern Ocean follow a pattern, which parallels Senapati's story in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*.

When the crown prince enters the golden pavilion (v-1–5), Ratu Kidul is impressed by his excellence, an incarnation of the god Wisnu, embraced by the star of royal destiny (*Tuhu yen jalma linuwih, titising Wisnu Bathara, pulung irhas pulĕtane*; v-7). With this description, the storyteller introduces a pivotal scene:

v-8. *Puwara sang raja dewi / [...] / sasmita mring wadyanira / ing mangke sang sudibya / raja putra ing Matarum / sisilih nami narendra//*	8. Finally the queen, [....], indicated to her spirit army that now the excellent one, the son of the Mataram kin, will assume the royal title,
v-9. *Jĕng Sultan Agung rat adi / prabu Anyakrakusuma / ngabdul rahman sayidine / panata gama kalipah / tolah samsu mirijal*[48] */ senapati ngalaga gung / keh wadya mituhu sabda //*	9. His Highness Sultan Agung the Principle of the World,[49] King Anyakrakusuma,[50] Servant of the Merciful and Lord of Faith, Lawgiver of Religion, Representative of Allah on Earth, Sun of Mankind, Great Commander in Battle. The entire army expressed its consent.

48 Verena Meyer suggested this term is derived from the Arabic *shamsu 'l-rijāl* (elided to shamsurrijal).

49 Sultan Agung: Great Sultan.

50 Ruler of the universe. According to de Graaf (1953: 80), the names Anyakrawati and Anyakrakusuma are linked to Sunan Bonang, "the most famous saint" among the nine wali (Sugahara, this volume). This connection augments the spiritual prestige of the

With the title, the sultan acquires a new status and both worldly and spiritual power.[51] This mythical support for Sultan Agung as a historical figure will be inherited by all future Javanese kings up to the present.

From this moment onwards, Sultan Agung authorizes Ratu Kidul and her female soldiers to join and accompany him on his travels, on the condition that they will remain invisible (v-48). With her supernatural power she sustains him in fulfilling his duty as the king of Mataram, in particular when conquering other regions and islands and converting the inhabitants to Islam. When Sultan Agung longs for an encounter with the Queen, he goes to Pamancingan at Java's South Coast, where the Queen's palace is located.

Several divine sources of power and wisdom supported the coming together of the crown prince and Ratu Kidul, culminating in their relationship of love, beauty, power, and royalty. As the examples show, not only does the unification involve the entire cosmos, but also the ancestors of the Javanese royal dynasty of the right – Islamic prophets and saints – and the left – Hindu-Buddhist gods and heroes – lines of descent. In contrast to the divine world, Ratu Kidul, the Queen of the Southern Ocean, represents another aspect of the Javanese realm, which is considered to be a center of power: the world of the spirits. She controls the destructive power of the underworld creatures, the spirits and ghosts. When Sultan Agung is able to make use of this power and turn its negative character into a positive one, he will become invincible. Taking her as his spouse enables him to profit from her sěkti. Ratu Kidul promises to assist and protect the king with her spirit army in times of difficulty and danger. Also, she predicts his future and the future of his heirs. The sultan and the queen form a perfect union and their relationship clearly has a political function. Ratu Kidul contributes to the sultan's new status when in her presence and with the consent of the spirits, the sultan is given a royal title. She accompanies the sultan wherever he goes, as always invisible, but perceptible at ceremonies and rituals because of her fragrance. Her presence at Sultan Agung's coronation ceremony as the Queen of Mataram adds luster and power to the event (xii). All the while, as the narrator underlines, for several reasons she is not the sultan's equal.

In oral literature and folk tales, Ratu Kidul appears above all as the goddess Durga and as Dewi Sri. As Durga, she brings illness and death to those who do not respect her rules. As Dewi Sri, she is associated with a prosperous harvest,

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Javanese monarchs. See also Florida (1995: 95) about the name/title Anyakrakusuma designating (universal) overlordship.

51 In 1641, the king of Mataram sent an envoy to Mecca in order to obtain the Islamic title of Sultan (Pigeaud and De Graaf 1976: 49).

which can relate to the rice crop, fishing, or the gathering of swallows' nests. The *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* features the Queen in both capacities. In the tale of the planting of the first rice plants and coconut trees, as mentioned above, Ratu Kidul acts as the goddess of fertility (XXXV).[52] In another recension of the *Nitik* tales, with her destructive powers she controls a snake plague on the premises of Sultan Agung's future burial place at Imagiri (Cod. Or. 6476: XV–XVI).

Whereas the outward appearance of the male characters in the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* does not receive detailed attention, the Queen's excellent beauty is described elaborately and stereotypically in *candra*, descriptions of a person's traits using metaphors, and features abundantly in the love scenes with Sultan Agung (e.g., in V-38). Considered to be an embodiment of Dewi Ratih, the beautiful love goddess, her outward appearance corresponds to the prototype of a Javanese princess.

The Queen of the Southern Ocean does not only provide the sultan with a royal title and military support. She also contributes to another significant aspect of kingship, namely the royal arts. Her dancers and pleasure-gardens are sources of inspiration to the sultan and form the origin of particular sacred court dances and music that become royal heirlooms (*pusaka kraton*). The coming into being of the Bĕdhaya Sĕmang, the *srimpi* and the Gamĕlan Sĕkaten in the presence of Ratu Kidul makes Sultan Agung a patron of the royal arts, "an act that defines and proves the kingship of the ruler" (Behrend 1993: 414).[53]

Like Sunan Kalijaga, Ratu Kidul is a personal adviser of the Sultan. When the Portugese invite Sultan Agung to solve the chaos in the Land of the Straits (*nagari Sĕlat*; XI-1) and he is about to be installed on the throne, Ratu Kidul intervenes. She reminds him of his duties in Mataram and reprimands him that he cannot possibly betray his faithful subjects there. Emotionally somewhat manipulative, she begs him to return to Java; she herself will take care of the peace in Sĕlat. Once the issue has been resolved, Sultan Agung will be installed on the throne in Singapura, Sĕlat and Mataram (XI-16–18).

52 Beatty (2012: 180) refers to the *sĕblang* trance dance of Bakungan, close to the East Javanese Banyuwangi, in which the first clearing of the forest and planting of the rice is enacted. The local interpretation of this enactment suggests a parallel with the first rice planting of Ratu Kidul and Sultan Agung.

53 In 2020, the rehearsal of the sacred Bĕdhaya Sĕmang was resumed at the Kraton of Yogyakarta (written communication with Theresia Suharti).

8 The Pandhawas: "All of Them Passed Down Their Teachings"[54]

When the king is very worried – his younger brother died in the war with Pathi, there is unrest in the outer provinces (*mancanagara*) – every night he devotes himself to prayers (*Yen dalu tansah akajad*; XXI-2). In this period of despair, Sunan Kalijaga visits Sultan Agung in his place of worship. He is aware that the sultan is asking for superior powers (*kaluwiyan*) and admonishes him for this. You should request your forefathers to give you these powers, he says, referring to the Pandhawa brothers who dwell on the island of Brambang. Everything the sultan is looking for will be granted (XXI-5). An envoy is sent to Nusa Brambang to receive the teachings (XXI-6), but the Pandhawa brothers want to meet with Sultan Agung in person.

In Mataram, each member of the Pandhawas passes down a teaching to the sultan:

XXI-10. *Nata matur mring Pandhawa / anuwun Jaya Kusuma / sindhung miwah panglemunan / myang aji asmaragama / sarta warna roro tunggal / sadaya angsung wasiyat / pranyata Jaya Kusuma / panguripaning bawana //*

10. The king spoke to the Pandhawas, requesting the Jaya Kusuma, the Sindhung and Panglemunan, the Aji Asmaragama and the Two Forms Being One. All of them passed down their teachings. Actually, the Wijaya Kusuma, the flower of life, the origin of the world,

XXI-11. *Prabu Murti kang wasiyat / sindhung saking Wĕrkudara / panglemunan Yudhisthira / sang Parta asmaragama / kĕmbar angsung napi isbat / kabeh wus kagĕm jĕng sultan / dadya nata gung sudibya / ngimpuni wicaksanengrat //*

11. was passed down by Prabu Murti (Krĕsna); Wĕrkudara taught the *sindhung*, the magic formula of the storm; Yudhistira presented the magic formula of invisibility (*panglemunan*), Arjuna[55] instructed the charm of love (*asmaragama*) and the twins Nakula and Sadewa the *napi isbat*, the non-being and the being.[56] Sultan Agung received them all and became a great and illustrious king, the one most endowed with wisdom.

54 *Sadaya angsung wasiyat* (XXI-10).

55 In the Javanese text Arjuna is also called Parta.

56 On *nafi* or *napi isbat*, see Drewes 1968: 215 ff.; Arps 2019: 9; Florida 2019: 169. It is interesting that the Pandhawas as representatives of the left line of descent pass on a teaching belonging to the Islamic right line.

The contents of the magic formulas however are not revealed to the audiences, as only the king deserves to learn and possess them.

The Pandhawa brothers, representatives of the left line of descent, are main characters in the Mahabharata epic and heroes of the Javanese past. Known as courageous, heroic, resolute, powerful, firm, and magnanimous, they overcome all obstructions and hindrances they meet successfully (Sudibyoprono 1991: 375). If the king is given these qualities, it will empower his kingship. As an effect of cultural proximity, the Javanese audiences of the *Sĕrat Nitik* tales, to whom the history and the adventures of the Pandhawa brothers are very familiar from the performing arts and literature, and who identify with their heroic qualities, consider them exemplary characters and credible sources of authority.

When Hindu-Buddhist deities instruct Arjuna, the third Pandhawa, and his beloved Sumbadra, to enter the bodies of the crown prince and Ratu Kidul, there is an immediate effect: they are overcome by love, due to Arjuna's magic love formula (*aji asmaragama*) (IV-36). Since Arjuna and Sumbadra, both very good looking and an ideal match, are themselves incarnations of God Wisnu and Goddess Sri,[57] they bestow the crown prince and the Goddess of the Southern Ocean with the divine qualities of Wisnu and Sri (IV-31–36).

9 The One in Disguise: "I Have Been Granted Permission to Instruct You"[58]

My last example of an instruction to Sultan Agung concerns an event happening in Bantĕn, where Sultan Agung has an encounter with a man in disguise ([*a*]*mindha*) (XVIII-15, 17). Radiant and in full glory, sitting on his golden throne and carried by his white, faithful, and powerful spirit-servant Juru Taman,[59] Sultan Agung flies to Bantĕn, where he wants to inspect the conditions. After an encounter with the king of Bantĕn, the sultan wishes to return to Mataram but Juru Taman is nowhere to be seen (XVIII-7). As he relies on his spirit-servant to reach home, the sultan is distressed. He begins meditating, sitting on a stone and facing the direction of Mecca, hoping to be given a solution (XVIII-9). Suddenly, a refined middle-aged man appears in front of him, radiant like the full moon. The man who had just arrived speaks sweetly (XVIIII-10):

57 Wisnu is the son of the supreme God Bathara Guru; Sri is Wisnu's spouse.

58 *wus pinarĕng ulun kiye / mĕjang dhatĕng sireku* (XVIII-14).

59 Also called Laweyan Putih (White Spirit), he used to serve Panĕmbahan Senapati (XVII-2).

xviii-10: [...] *eh sultan kapanggih ngriki / ingsun mangke wĕwarta //*

10. "Hey, Sultan, we have this encounter as I shall teach you

xviii-11: *Ngong sung peling madĕg Narapati / botĕn kenging nĕnggih salah karya / manggung orĕm sarirane / paran wĕkasanipun / ngandĕlaken la*[91]*weyan putih / kang bisa anyeluman / tan nganděl Hyang Agung / lah kadi paran ing mangkya /* [...] *//*

11. and remind you that in one's capacity as a king one should not fail in what one does, and be continuously sad. What if you end up trusting a white spirit who can become invisible, rather than putting your faith in the hands of the All Mighty? Well, what will it lead to, later on?

Hearing this, the sultan wonders how the One in Disguise was able to read his thoughts and feelings. He surrenders and is prepared to receive the man's admonition. He also requests assistance in getting home (xvii-12). When asking who he is, the man does not want to reveal his identity, he just says (xviii-13): "Stop being sad, you will receive the Lord's compassion. I have been granted permission to instruct you."[60] He invites the sultan to come close to him and teaches him the true secret knowledge (*Sasĕngkran parama widya*; xviii-14). Then the concealed one speaks: "Hey sultan, here is my final request to you. When you are back in Mataram, embellish the grave of Sunan Bayat soon, as its condition is not yet proper." After the sultan agrees, the man in disguise then discloses the truth to the one who had just been initiated (xviii-15). After having told this intimate story, the narrator reflects on people's discussions about the identity of the man in disguise:

xviii-16: *Kaoling kandha dadya bĕgandring / den wastani pangran Pandhan Arang / sunan Bayat kapisane / wĕneh ngarani dudu / ugi sunan Bayat kaping tri / kang anama pangeran / Minangkabu iku / kawĕntar sĕkti digdaya / ana uga mastani jĕng sunan Kali / Jaga sawĕnehira //*

16. The tradition became a topic of discussion. He was called prince Pandhan Arang, or Sunan Bayat the First. Others said it was not him, but Sunan Bayat the Third, who was called prince Minangkabau, and was famous for his supernatural power. There were also people who said it was Sunan Kalijaga.

60 *Wus pinarĕng ulun kiye / mĕjang dhatĕng sireku* (xviii-14).

XVIII-17: *Wontĕn ingkang nĕnggih amastani / mijil saking gaibing Hyang Suksma / walahu alam tĕmahe /* [...]	17. Some considered him to have come forth from the mystical powers of God, hence God knows best.

Then, the narrator returns to his telling of the story: the man urges the sultan to enter the sleeve of his jacket and in the blink of an eye they arrive in Mataram (XVIII-18).

In this scene, the One in Disguise admonishes the sultan, pointing him to his erring conviction when he relies on the power of a spirit, which God (the God of Islam) does not approve of. A king should not fail in what he does! This reprimand stirs the sultan to show remorse and attain a state of perfect meditation. Only then can he receive the secret doctrine which he needs in order to strengthen his kingship. The man does not only instruct the sultan, he also uses his sĕkti to bring the sultan back to Mataram in the sleeve of his jacket.

This passage, which is followed by the tale of the building of the burial place in Tĕmbayat,[61] is an instance of oral storytelling as presented by the narrator on which the actual rendering in the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* may have been based. After having told that the One in Disguise revealed his identity to the sultan – actually in this recension without revealing his name – in the following stanzas the narrator reflects on the telling of the tale. He refers to people's various interpretations of the identity of the man with whom Sultan Agung had an encounter and about whom they argued, offering various suggestions, all of them credible authorities. Was it Sunan Bayat the First or the Third, who taught the sultan the secret teachings and brought him to Mataram? Others claimed that it was Sunan Kalijaga, and others again called the apparition a figure emerging from the power of the Immaterial One. The fact that, according to the storyteller, the meeting between the One in Disguise and Sultan Agung had been "the talk of the village," puts their encounter in another perspective. The reference to its oral history links the scene to tradition and enhances the credibility of the tale.

61 The Central Javanese Tĕmbayat is the location where Sunan Bayat resided. His grave has become a popular pilgrimage site until now. Tĕmbayat was the centre of rebellion against the kings of Pajang.

10 Concluding Remarks

Having studied fragments of the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*, we need to question what new insights we can gain from this exercise. First, I will focus on the rhetoric of persuasion and on ideas of power and authority as they are represented and claimed within the narrative.

The *Nitik* fragments I discussed in this article pre-eminently exemplify how much the narrator entwines motifs, ideologies, and characteristics of the Hindu-Buddhist and Muslim upperworld and the world of the spirits. The three spheres of belief are mutually inclusive and belong to the Javaneseness as displayed in specific Javanese literature written in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Islam being the dominant religion at the Javanese courts.[62] The fragments demonstrate how representatives of the upperworld, belonging to the left and right lines of descent, and the Queen of the spirit world are portrayed as interacting with the main protagonist and with each other. The narrator presents the readers of, and listeners to, the tales with extensive descriptions of the circumstances in which they pass on their words of power and wisdom. The contents of the messages, however, are usually not revealed to the audience. Secret knowledge is only given to the one who deserves to receive it. But the audiences know this.

We learn how the messengers of the powerful and wise words contribute to the development of the crown prince and have an impact on the history of Sultan Agung. They are shown supporting him by initiating him into kingship, giving him instructions, admonitions, advice, and a royal title, by teaching him the secret knowledge and passing down magic charms. Featuring their presence and performance, the narrator links the present (at the time of the

62 Ras (1992: 291) writes that "in Javanese culture, the Hindu heritage and the new religious faith of Islam are to be considered as inseparable as the ancestral couple of the pedigree." Also, according to Ras (1992: 295), Javanese court life will of necessity always be an aesthetic compromise between ancient cultural traditions and modern Islam, since Javanese kingship has its roots in the pre-Islamic past. Ricklefs (2006: 222–23) uses the term "reconciliation of identities." He calls it "a trade-off between two quite different ways of looking at the phenomenal and eternal worlds." But, there is "no abandonment of older cultural forms" (Ricklefs 2006: 223–24). He also uses the term "mystic synthesis" (2006: 221–22; this volume), on which I have commented above. Wieringa (2018: 184) uses the verb "redefined" when he refers to the relation between "the age-old Indic tradition" and the "Islamicate environment"; Arps (2019: 15, 22) uses the term "compatible" for the link between Buddhic and Islamic ideas and knowledge; for various reasons, Wieringa and Arps do not incorporate the forces of the spirit world into their analysis. Florida (forthcoming) calls the coming together of the spheres of Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, Islam, and the Javanese spirit world "a tradition of dialogic encounters."

writing and telling in the second half of the nineteenth century) to a glorious past, set in the first half of the seventeenth century. Belonging to the collective memory of the Javanese audiences, these messengers are staged to build credence with their charisma, status, extraordinary capacities and qualities, knowledge, wisdom and power, and their concern with Mataram's welfare – all of this resonating in the person of the crown prince, the later Sultan Agung. The audiences are familiar with these sources from oral and written traditions, and this proximity enhances their credibility. Actually, all the characters I mentioned in this chapter appear in the Javanese court chronicles (*Babad Tanah Jawi*), parts of which have become well-known in popular drama and movies. References to oral testimonies and to authoritative texts are another means to build credence, to claim the authenticity of the tales and to authorize the telling.[63] It seems (but this needs further investigation) that such references, together with the extensive descriptions of the meeting of the authoritative sources with Sultan Agung in the *Nitik* tales, may help us to unravel the composition processes and structure of these texts and their relations with the Javanese court chronicles. Most probably, the brief sequences on the history of Mataram are based on a version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*[64] and form the basic pattern, the axis of the *Nitik* tales. The very elaborate and lively narratives on the life and deeds of the crown prince, later to become Sultan Agung, provide the audiences with intimate information of another kind.[65]

In short, the analysis of the text fragments from the perspective of "source credibility" presents us with insights in late nineteenth-century world views regarding religiosity and spirituality that have been projected on the seventeenth-century life and deeds of Sultan Agung. The examples in this chapter show how rhetoric and style are tools that are used in the narrative for informative and persuasive aims.

Secondly, I would like to go into a few questions that are related to some of the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*'s functions and its potential audiences: Why was it considered important in the second half of the nineteenth century to tell these tales about Sultan Agung and confirm his eminence? Why did he, the famous sultan, still have to be glorified? Who would have to be persuaded? In other words, who would have been the audiences of this *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*?

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63 I have not discussed the references to authoritative written texts in this article. For an extensive comparison of the scenes featuring Ratu Kidul in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and the *Sĕrat Nitik Sultan Agung*, see Bogaerts 1990.

64 Maybe the Yogyakarta *Babad Kraton*, but this needs to be investigated still.

65 See Rinkes (1911: 490): "onderwerpen van meer intiemen aard uit het leven der vorsten [...] en die in de officiëele Babad Tanah Djawi niet ter sprake komen."

To begin with the latter, the readers and listeners are not easily traceable. A deeper knowledge of the circumstances at the Yogyakarta court at the time of the writing/copying of the manuscripts and the way the texts were dealt with are indispensable. However, references in the text and historical evidence may also give us some clues. We know that the Sultan Agung tales are meant to instruct the readers and listeners and to transmit knowledge. The text contained in the manuscript of Cod. Or. 6489a mentions this explicitly. It was written for or commissioned by the Ratu Agĕng, the royal spouse of the late Sultan Haměngku Buwana VI (r. 1855–77), with the intention to tell the story of the young Agung to her son, Sultan Haměngku Buwana VII (r. 1877–1921) and to set an example.[66] Herewith we have identified one specific audience member. Since *wulang*, the didactic moralistic aspect, has a prominent place in the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik*, it is clear that Sultan Agung functions as a role model, in this case in particular for the sultan-to-be in the late 1870s. The tales explain and demonstrate the meaning of good leadership, as an example to the sultan's descendants (Suradi 1991–92: 227). The text I analysed in this article (dated 1908) goes back to a copy written between 1873 and 1876.[67] Sultan Haměngku Buwana VII was installed on the throne in 1877. Most probably, the Ratu Agĕng meant it to be an initiation in kingship for her eldest son before his inauguration.

There may be other reasons why the Ratu Agĕng considered the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* significant for her son. For years, circles at the Yogyakarta court and Dutch officials had been questioning who was the legitimate heir to the throne: the eldest son of the Ratu Agĕng[68] or his cousin (and maybe half-brother). A first conspiracy in 1864 and court intrigues complicated the matter (Kumar 1982: 253).[69] Eventually, in 1872 the eldest son was appointed crown prince and his mother was raised to the rank of queen (*ratu*), becoming the (second) official wife of Haměngku Buwana VI (Houben 1994: 214). In this light, Anyakrawati's last words after having taught his son as told in the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* may be endowed with additional meaning if read from the perspective of the Ratu Agĕng: "Only you, my son, deserve to become the king of Java."

66 Cod. Or. 6489a 1-3: *marmanira anĕdhak Srat Babad Nitik / yogya karya darsana* (the reason why the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* was copied, was that it was appropriate to set an example). The first canto (stanzas 4–6) contains a reference to the Ratu Agĕng. The exact dating of the original text that was commissioned by the Ratu Agĕng needs more investigation.

67 The use of the word *anĕdhak* (to copy) (see previous footnote) may indicate that this nineteenth century text was copied from an older text.

68 Then not yet having this title, but called Raden Ayu Sĕpuh (Houben 1994: 214).

69 The crown prince's competitor, his mother, and his following continued to claim the throne, which in 1883 led to the so called Suryengalagan affair (Kumar 1982).

The *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* also targeted a wider audience, namely the present and future kings of Java. The wisdom and power of their ancestor Sultan Agung, acquired via the teachings of the credible authorities, "radiate" onto the contemporary rulers of the Central Javanese courts. As it says in the text, all the excellent kings in Yogyakarta, from the first king onwards, and in Surakarta, follow Sultan Agung's conduct (XXXV-11). The tales confirm the power of the Mataram rulers and the heirs to the throne until now (now, at the time of the writing and telling), and emphasize the strong genealogical link with the founders of the dynasty.

Lastly, the *Nitik* tales present a Javanese narrative of a heroic past and a strong ruler in a period when the grip of the Dutch colonialists on local society had become increasingly firm. The colonial power intervened in internal administrative, military, economic, and judicial affairs, and even in royal weddings and successions to the throne (see Houben 1994; Sri Margana et al. 2018). As Sultan Agung is also remembered in Javanese historical tradition as the great conqueror, the pious Muslim and the opponent of the Dutch (Ricklefs 1974: 18), the *Nitik* tales may have been a source of mental support to the colonized Javanese. Emphasizing Sultan Agung's belief, his quest for knowledge of Islamic sufism, and his Islamizing of the surrounding world, may have been perceived as a narrative of resistance, countering the narrative of the Dutch infidels, to those who were able to read or listen between the lines.[70] This possibly justifies why the *Nitik* manuscripts continued to be copied until the early 1940s.

However, the *Nitik* tales must have had other functions as well. In this chapter, I have only focused on the scenes telling of the instructions with which the crown prince is prepared for kingship. As there are so many other scenes that contain messages and moods of a different kind and order, the audience range of the *Sĕrat Babad Nitik* must have been much wider. For sure, the tales must have been read and vocalized for entertainment purposes.

To conclude, I briefly want to mention one of the most important themes that come to the fore when studying Javanese texts, namely their rootedness in a specific place. It is this particular place and its characteristics that determine ideas on power and wisdom, grounded as they are in local culture. The sultan's power and wisdom are closely connected to the geographical, political, and cultural spaces of the seventeenth-century Mataram kingdom and the Yogyakarta sultanate of the nineteenth century, its aura stretching to the courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta of the present day. Place also means Mecca, Rum and Stambul, for instance, as centers of Islam and spaces of power,

70 See also Bogaerts (1990: 45).

indicating the connection between Java and the Middle East. It comprises the dwellings of the Hindu-Buddhist deities and the Queen of the spirits and the connotations these dwellings generate to the audiences. It includes the area of Yogyakarta where the stories of Sultan Agung were (and still are) told and the palaces of the Yogyakarta aristocracy where scribes created the manuscripts, as well as the realm of Mataram, enclosed by a wall of white cotton, said to be a locus of welfare and prosperity.

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CHAPTER 9

On the Wrong Side of History: Key Episodes in the *Sĕrat Rama* and the *Panji Paniba*

Willem van der Molen

Abstract

The Panji Paniba (1817) can be read as an early protest against the colonial occupation of Java by the Dutch (1816–1942). Channels to voice political opinions, like journals or pamphlets, were not available to the Javanese at the time. Instead, the anonymous author turns to literature to convey his view, creating a new story in the well-known genre of the Panji tale. Panji tales are notorious for their endless entanglements, around a central plot shared by all (that a given Javanese kingdom is attacked by a foreign power, with the aim to seize the daughter of the king). To make sure his main point does not escape the attention the author of the Panji Paniba alerts his readers by an unusual step: by borrowing and building into his own text the central plot of a completely different but no less well-known story, that of Rama and Sita. This famous epic from India in various local guises had enjoyed uninterrupted popularity since it introduction to Java more than a thousand years before. The role of the enemy in the Panji Paniba quite traditionally and in this case perhaps also cautiously is assigned to some regional entity. Gradually, by various narrative and stylistic means in the course of the story the enemy betrays more and more traits of the Dutch.

Keywords

allegory – colonialism – Javanese view

1 Introduction

kula kang malih warneku	I'll change my outward appearance,
awarni kidang kancana	and assume the form of a golden deer.

Sĕrat Rama, Canto 10.2 (ed. KATS 1925)

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With these words begins a famous scene in the Javanese *Sĕrat Rama*, the scene of the deer with the golden hair. The *Sĕrat Rama* was written in the eighteenth century as one of countless renderings of the Ramayana, the great epic from India. Making its appearance in Java in the ninth century almost simultaneously in stone (in a temple relief) and in writing, the epic has continued to move the hearts of the Javanese for more than a thousand years. Time and again it was reproduced in all sorts of artistic expression; up till today people read it, listen to it, watch it, refer to it and cite from it, and call their children and business companies after its heroes. It was even used for the periodization of Indonesia's history (by G.J. Resink; see Resink 1975).

The story of Rama and Sinta is too well known to need a lengthy introduction. Dasarata, king of Ayodya, has four sons. It is his wish to be succeeded one day by his eldest son, Rama, but due to an earlier promise it is another son who becomes the next king, while Rama is sent into exile. Accompanied only by his wife Sinta and one loyal brother, Laksmana, Rama starts living the life of an ascetic in the forest. A foreign king, Rawana, informed about Sinta's extraordinary beauty, kidnaps her and takes her to his overseas kingdom, Lĕngka. The war that follows brings about Rawana's death and Sinta's liberation (an English translation of the complete story can be found in Robson 2015, with reference to the Old Javanese version).

The story of the deer appears when Rawana is on the verge of seizing Sinta, but first has to lure her protectors, Rama and Laksmana, away. In the lines quoted at the top of this chapter, it is his servant Marica who is speaking. Marica is addressing his lord in response to the latter's request to assist him in kidnapping Sinta. Soon Marica fulfills his plan and changes himself into a deer with golden hair, so as to arouse Sinta's desire. With success: she sends Rama and Laksmana after the deer and thus, left defenseless, becomes easy prey for Rawana. This event is the impetus for the war between Rama and Rawana.

2 Imitation

Interestingly, there exists a skillful imitation of the scene of the deer in a completely different story, which has nothing to do with Rama and Sinta. I am referring to the *Panji Paniba*. In this story, written in the early nineteenth century, there is also a lady in a forest, who is likewise abandoned by her guardians at the sight of a seductive animal. Here, as in the story of Rama and Sinta, it is a ruse with the purpose of kidnapping the lady. With the same effect: a war, to set the lady free.

The lady concerned is Sĕkartaji, the female hero of the *Panji Paniba*; her flawed protector is her prospective husband, Panji, the male hero of the story.

Sĕkartaji is kidnapped on behalf of the king of Makassar, who has sailed to Java with the aim of making the princess his own. The role of the deer in this story is filled by a dove.

The main line of the *Panji Paniba* is as follows. Princess Sĕkartaji of the kingdom of Kediri disappears all of a sudden without leaving a trace. Quite a few people set out to find her, including her fiancé, Panji, crown prince of the kingdom of Jĕnggala. While the efforts of all the others remain fruitless – which does not prevent them from having many adventures – it is Panji who finds the princess, in the forest. Before long, she disappears again, however, having successfully been kidnapped by a helper of the king of Makassar, whose assistant in crime in the guise of a beautiful dove has distracted Panji. Now the prince confronts the king of Makassar. The king is killed, and the princess is set free.

The *Panji Paniba* is an elaboration of the common plot of the so-called Panji tales. There are many such elaborations, created in a tradition of more than six centuries, which is still very much alive today (Poerbatjaraka 1940: 367 makes an estimation about the beginning of the tradition; Kieven 2020 reviews modern interest). The common plot involves four Javanese kingdoms, a princess who disappears and a prince who finds her again. The name of the princess is Sĕkartaji or some other name, while the prince – her fiancé – is referred to by his title, Panji (which is also the collective name of these tales). Notwithstanding the plot common to all tales, each tale stands on its own, although there is quite a lot of mutual borrowing of narrative elements.

No reader familiar with Javanese literature would fail to recognize the scene of the deer in the scene with the dove. Nor would any reader expect the scene from the epic in a Panji story. After all, the two narratives have little in common, apart from the religious background of Hinduism. Their settings and the textual traditions they belong to are completely different: sacred history of ancient India, versus fictionalized history of medieval Java; many renderings telling one story, versus one plot brought to life in many different stories. The contents of the two stories are also different: Panji stories are about a prince and a princess who have to overcome all sorts of difficulties as a condition for their union. Rama and Sinta on the other hand are already a married couple. Their aim is not to realize union, but to undo separation.

This anomaly of a narrative element transplanted into an alien context arouses curiosity.[1] How does the scene of the deer fit in the *Panji Paniba*? What

1 Intertextuality at its best, as an analytical tool, circumventing any urge to trace origins because the origin is easily recognized. Too often according to F.W. Korsten intertextual relations are reduced to hierarchic relations ("which one was first"), instead of being used as a source of information on the dynamics of meaning (Korsten n.d.: 130). Ricci in this volume, addressing intertextuality in texts on walis and prophets, speaks of tales, not versions, in order to avoid any interference of problems of origin.

kind of adjustments do we see? Are there more borrowings from the same source? And above all: why was it borrowed?

The similarity seems to be more than just incidental: the scene is firmly anchored in the *Panji Paniba* by related elements of the epic. For example, the strong advice not to kidnap the Javanese princess, for moral and practical reasons, given to the king of Makassar by his prime minister, is reminiscent of the way Rawana in the epic is advised by his righteous brother Wibisana against kidnapping Sinta. Another example is how Sĕkartaji, once kidnapped, is protected by the king's sister, like Sinta is in the epic by Wibisana's daughter Trijata.

The way the poet of the *Panji Paniba* deals with the supernatural aspect of his example is quite creative. Rama, in the epic, is facing a supernatural enemy: his opponent is a demon, as are his subordinates. There is nothing strange about demons in the epic; they have a place in Hinduism alongside gods and humans. The *Panji Paniba*, although placed in a Hindu setting, was written in the Islamic era, hence the poet may have thought it wise to tone down the supernatural and adjust it to his (Muslim) readers' horizons of expectation. Panji's enemy is a human being of flesh and blood, like himself: the Makassarese king, unlike Rawana in the epic, is not the king of demons. However, this does not settle all the poet's problems. The demons in the story of Rama and Sinta represent the wickedness combatted by Rama. What wickedness is there to be faced by Panji?

Both the how and the why of the borrowings are interesting problems deserving our attention. As the how is partly determined by the why, in this chapter I shall give priority to the second question.

3 Directives

There is no obvious answer to the question of why such scenes as mentioned in the previous section were borrowed by the *Panji Paniba*. Should we think of authority or prestige, accrued over the ages by the epic? But then, Panji stories can boast of a long tradition of their own; there is no need to borrow authority or prestige from outside. Or should we think of imitation for the sake of embellishment? As far as the epic is concerned, both the Old and Modern Javanese versions count as the summit of poetic beauty in their times. Again, this seems unlikely, as the author of the *Panji Paniba* is a skillful poet himself.

I think we should look somewhere else for the answer: the author of the *Panji Paniba* in my view wishes to steer the reader in a particular direction. In both stories the abduction scene marks a major turn, from the episode of

the forest to the episode of the war. My hypothesis is that the author of the *Panji Paniba*, by using the scene of the dove as a marker, suggests an interpretation of his text similar to that of the story of Rama and Sinta.

The story of Rama and Sinta can be read in two ways. On one level it is a romantic story, about a couple whose happiness is ruined when the female partner is abducted. The male partner succeeds in killing the villain, and so husband and wife are restored to their original happiness. However, on a deeper level the story is about the struggle between good and evil in the world. Evil personified by Rawana threatens to gain the upper hand; the well-being of the world is at stake. The god Wisnu decides to rescue the world by descending to earth, incarnating himself in a human being, Rama. As Rama he will fight Rawana and restore the world to happiness. For this plan to be executed, it is necessary that Rama and Rawana be brought into contact with each other. Rama's banishment to the forest, the demoness in the forest falling in love with him and her subsequent humiliation, her grudge and her scheming to lure Rawana into kidnapping Sinta: these are all events which, on the face of it, look like a chain of unfortunate incidents making for an entertaining love story, but as they unfold events of universal dimensions are taking place. Behind the kidnapping there is another reason why Rawana should be killed. Rama's victory over Rawana is Wisnu's victory over evil.

There can be no doubt about the two levels of interpretation, because the story invites us to see it that way. The reader is constantly reminded of what the story really is about, in addition to the events which make up the life of Rama and Sinta, by references to the actual identity of the protagonists and the universal values which lie at the heart of the struggle.

If my hypothesis about the suggestive turn in the narrative of the *Panji Paniba* is correct, then we may ask: what is the actual identity of its protagonists, and which are the values underlying the conflict between the Makassarese and the Javanese? Are there references in the text helping us in our effort to unravel the hidden intentions of the narrative?

A closer look at the *Panji Paniba* is called for. But let me first introduce the sources of the texts I am using.

4 Sources

The *Panji Paniba* is written in poetry, the standard form of Javanese literature up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The text numbers 18,065 lines in 60 cantos. Canto 60.26, the final stanza of the text (see Javanese page 153 of the manuscript), informs us that the text was written in Surakarta, on the orders of

Crown Prince Mangkunegara, during the reign of Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788–1820). The author is not mentioned. The text is dated October 17, 1817 CE, or more precisely: the writing started on that date and was completed in the running Javanese year. In the wording of the text (Canto 60.26ab, Javanese page number 153 of the manuscript):

Titi wasananireng malupi	The end of the story
tunggil warsa lan panitranira	coincides with the year of its writing.

When this was, is indicated at the beginning of the text (Canto 1.3a–d; Javanese page number 1 of the manuscript):

sewu pitung atus nĕnggih dadi	(The century) one thousand seven hundred was on
catur ingkang pinurweng ukara	when the story was put into words,
Bĕsar ping lima taun Be	on 5 Besar of the year Be,
Jumungah tabuh pitu	Friday, at the stroke of seven.

October 17, 1817 CE is the equivalent of the Javanese date 5 Besar *windu* year Be 1744. This year began on Friday, November 22, 1816; see "Tijdrekening" 1927: 412. The Javanese year 1744 is expressed by the lines *sewu pitung atus nĕnggih dadi*, *catur ingkang pinurweng ukara* "(the year) one thousand seven hundred was on when the story was put into words." The second line is a chronogram; both *catur* and *pinurweng ukara* mean "4," *pinurweng ukara* by association with words like *ucap* "talk," *rumpaka* "literary embellishment," *anggit* "poem," as mentioned in Bratakesawa 1952: 48, s.v. *warna*. Pigeaud, while arriving at the same Javanese year 1744, equates this with 1816 CE, taking only the beginning of the year into account (Pigeaud 1968: 60).

The *Panji Paniba* was written on the basis of a *wayang gĕdhog* play, a type of wayang theater with two-dimensional leather puppets and with Panji tales as its special repertoire. The transformation from wayang play to poem is mentioned in stanzas 1 and 2 of the first canto; the source text is unknown and probably was not preserved (play scripts were – and are – not written down and circulated).

The text is preserved in a manuscript kept in Leiden, MS University Library Or. 2029. It is the only manuscript of the text I know. It is a copy, given the presence of copyist's errors and corrections.[2]

2 An example is the corrected mistake in Canto 33.26i (page 78 – Javanese numbering – of the manuscript): the copyist wrote *eman tĕmĕn wong juris* "too bad if a rascal," but should have

In the early nineteenth century, when the *Panji Paniba* was written, the story of Rama and Sinta was accessible in several forms and versions, in the first place the performances of the shadow theater. As the modern situation in Java shows, such performances were an excellent way for young and old to learn the stories of traditional literature; hence, every Javanese knows them (or used to know them) by heart. Unfortunately, little can be said about the situation in the early nineteenth century in general, or about performances of the *Panji Paniba* in particular, due to a lack of documentation. Carey, writing about a famous contemporary of our author, Dipanagara,[3] gives an impression of the widespread popularity of the shadow theater and its importance as a frame of reference, on the basis of information from secondary Javanese sources (in a section called "Importance of wayang in Javanese culture"; Carey 1974: 7–11).

Among the written forms of the Rama story were manuscripts containing the ancient text from the ninth century, the Ramayana, in the Old Javanese language. Modern versions were also available: the *jarwa* or "interpretation" (of the Old Javanese version), in its wording still close to Old Javanese, and a version in Modern Javanese. The latter was the *Sĕrat Rama*, created towards the end of the eighteenth century by Yasadipura.[4] The author of the *Panji Paniba*, being a poet, may have had access to all three written versions of the epic, old, *jarwa* and modern, but he will certainly have known the modern version, Yasadipura's poem. So would have his readers.

Around the time the author of the *Panji Paniba* composed his poem in 1817, some important social and political events were taking place in Java. One important event which occurred in neighboring Yogyakarta, which must also have drawn attention in Solo, was the marriage of the Yogyakarta sultan Hamengkubuwana IV on May 13, 1816 (Carey 2007: 411). Incidentally, among the festivities held on this occasion there was a performance of a wayang gĕdhog play, hence of a Panji story – but which one, I do not know.

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written *eman tĕmĕn wong agung kaya wong juris* "too bad if a nobleman would behave like a rascal"; the correction is added in the margin. The cause of the error is clear (twice *wong* in the same line).

3 The Yogyanese prince Dipanagara (1785–1855) rejected Dutch claims of authority in Java. The ensuing Java War (1825–30) ended with his defeat and the firm establishment of Dutch colonial rule. Dipanagara is celebrated as a national hero in Indonesia.

4 Yasadipura (1729–1803) was the court poet of Surakarta in the second half of the 18th century. He counts as the father of Modern Javanese literature. With him began a period of literary bloom of more than a hundred years. The *Sĕrat Rama* is only one out of many works for which he is famous.

The return of the Dutch to Java was important in a different way. They had been forced out by the British in 1810 (Hagen n.d.: 260–62), after two hundred years of commercial and military presence in the Indonesian archipelago. Once the Napoleonic wars in Europe were over, it was decided by the victors to restore the Dutch to their former position. The transfer of power from the British to the Dutch took place on August 19, 1816 (Carey 2007: 429). The poet of the *Panji Paniba* saw as it were before his eyes how his country was handed over by one foreign power to another. My interpretation of the *Panji Paniba* leads me to believe that the author was indeed deeply affected by the event and used the story to express his concern.

Meanwhile, the Javanese were left unmoved by the political changes of 1816, if we are to believe Dutch historiography. As one popular Dutch history book has it: "However, most of the indigenous inhabitants of the Indian archipelago hardly noticed the gunshots, the striking and hoisting of the flags and the promulgation of the proclamation [...] What the 'Dutch East-Indies' in the end would mean for the indigenous population was in any case still completely unclear in 1816" (Van den Doel 1996: 21).[5] I am not sure Van den Doel's picture is correct. Perhaps "the indigenous inhabitants" were not asked for their opinion. They surely did not have an army strong enough to interfere. Yet, remaining silent is not exactly what they did.

Let us see what the *Panji Paniba* has to say.

5 Identity and Values

Two questions were posed above, in the section before the previous one, about identity and values. These will be addressed in the present section, to begin with the question of identity: who are the Makassarese, for whom or what do they stand? The narrator does not tell us but gives several clues, which may be discovered by paying attention to appearance, attitude, and intentions.

5.1 *Appearance*

What the Makassarese look like is given attention early in the story, when two foreigners arrive at the royal court of Kediri. Both men introduce themselves as ambassadors of the king of Makassar; they bring presents and a letter.

5 "*De meeste inheemse bewoners van de Indische archipel merkten daarentegen de kanonschoten, het strijken en hijsen van de vlaggen en het afkondigen van de proclamatie nauwelijks op* [...] *Wat 'Nederlands-Indië' uiteindelijk zou gaan betekenen voor de inheemse bevolking van de archipel, was in 1816 in ieder geval nog geheel onduidelijk.*"

The Javanese rub their eyes with astonishment: they have never seen such strange beings before. What a spectacle! This is what they see (Canto 1.26–27):

rowa-rowa dědĕge sami	They were of robust stature.
rema lir winusonan	Their hair looked as if it had been brushed with a *wusu*,
bĕrintik den adhul	it was curled and was scattered about untidily,
kang saparo munggeng jaja	hanging half on their chests,
aneng gĕgĕr saparo prapteng cacĕthik	half on their backs, reaching to the hips.
rawis ngumbala wĕdhar	Their curly moustaches were spreading wide.
agodheg wok simbar jajaneki	They wore whiskers and beards; their chests were covered with shaggy hair.
yen lumampah kudhaplang kudhaplang	As they walked, they waved their arms about.

Winusonan ("treated with a *wusu*") in the second line refers to an instrument known from the history of the cotton industry (see Van der Molen forthcoming). It was meant to pluck the cotton, after it had been cleaned and carded, to make it airy. Think of the effect of backcombing hair. So, the comparison apparently suggests a flicked-up or bouffant hairdo, quite the opposite of the Javanese ideal.

The Javanese are lost in amazement. These people are in every respect different from how they look themselves: small, moving about without any noise, smooth hair neatly tied together and tucked under a headscarf. But courtesy is strictly maintained. In the *Panji Paniba*, Makassar was not unknown to the Javanese. The two nations according to the story have commercial ties, which implies regular visits to harbor cities. Now a visit to the court takes place. There is no mockery or fear. The Javanese keep their amazement to themselves; the tone of what follows displays respect and equality.

This reaction can be explained. The Javanese are known for their high and refined culture. The *Panji Paniba* nourishes the reader's high opinion by referring to reading and writing literature, enjoying and making music, singing, dancing, and etiquette, all as part of Javanese upbringing, at least in the higher echelons of society. Not part of one's upbringing but connected with it in the eyes of the Javanese is outward appearance: refined people are handsome. The text makes it clear that the Makassarese ideas about culture and civilization correspond with those of the Javanese: they esteem similar qualities. At the Makassarese court we meet with the same manifestations of refined manners,

skills and looks, be they sometimes unevenly distributed (the Makassarese prime minister is a refined person and a man of letters, while the king is a rough character, embarrassing his subjects when he starts singing). So there is enough room for mutual appreciation on the basis of equality.

The Makassarese, like their Buginese neighbors, are known for their enterprise and their fighting spirit. Their appearance corresponds with their reputation: a sturdy build, a heavy step, abundant hair growth. Actually, to my taste there is little of an Indonesian flavor in the description. If the context had not told us otherwise, I might well have believed that it was a bunch of Europeans who had stepped through the door.

5.2 *Intention*

The letter from Makassar contains a marriage proposal, asking the king of Kediri for his daughter's hand. The ambassadors arrive at a critical moment. The princess has disappeared, no one knows where she is, and the king of Kediri, seeing that all possible sources of information about his vanished daughter have been exhausted without result, is announcing a *sayĕmbara* as a last resort: whoever is able to trace her whereabouts and bring her back, will be rewarded by marrying the princess and obtaining half of the kingdom. The king of Makassar is forthwith invited to join the *sayĕmbara*.[6]

In one of the next scenes, we learn about the intentions ascribed to foreigners. The Javanese king's welcoming disposition towards the ambassadors and their king contrasts with the suspicion about their intentions on the part of his elder sister, when she is informed about the visit. She fears hidden motives. Foreigners never give presents for nothing, such is her conviction (Canto 2.17–18):

lah puniku yayi aji	That is how it is, my dear brother king;
tan kenging den gagampil	the nature of the foreigners
wong sabrang wawatĕkipun	ought not be taken lightly.
adat sok botĕn lamba	Their conduct is never simple.
wiwinih guna piranti	Their principle is: what's in it and what can you do with it.
wiwitane lawan wĕkasane beda	There is a difference between how it begins and how it ends.
sĕngadine ngalap jiwa	What is false about them: they behave charmingly;

6 A *sayĕmbara* is a "contest of arms, with as prize being chosen in marriage by a princess [in ancient story]" (Robson and Wibisono n.d., s.v. *sayembara*).

ing wasana sanggarunggi	suspicion comes later.
sampun ta kirang prayitna	Stay alert!
sae rinangkĕpan batin	They look all right but they are two-faced.
sok sampun anyagahi	They often make promises
nuli dhatĕng amběk rusuh	and then they show their colors.
puniku adat sabrang	That's the way of foreigners.

This is a clear statement. But how can the lady be so firm? Does she speak from personal experience, has she met foreigners before, did others inform her, or do we sense xenophobia? The story does not tell. The only thing we hear about her is that she spends her days as a hermit in seclusion (a *kili suci*, "holy female hermit," in Javanese). Persons like her, male and female, are held in high esteem in Javanese society, and their wisdom in both spiritual things and worldly matters is acknowledged and valued. It makes sense if the king – her younger brother – asks her advice.

Were foreigners really seen as calculating and unreliable? Which foreigners? By whom? A correct interpretation of what the king's sister is saying requires more information, which the rudimentary state of Javanese textual studies makes hard to find. Pending further research, I can point out the following. The Makassarese appear in traditional Javanese historiography as regular troops, involved in the battles and wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Java, and – staying in Java after disbandment – as gangs scouring the country; see for example *Babad Tanah Djawi* 1939–1941 or *Babad Tanah Djawi* 1987, passim. There is no mention of their supposedly calculating or unreliable nature, but then, there is not much of characterization anyway in these chronicles or *babads*. Some of the more articulate characterizations in the babads do not relate to Makassarese but to Europeans. I found one which is part of a discussion held among Bantenese leaders in the late 1620s, on the calculating and unreliable nature of the Dutch, who are stealthily turning the trading post they were given in Jakĕrta into a fort (*Sajarah Bantĕn* Canto 29–30, as summarized by Djajadiningrat 1913: 44. *Sajarah* is another word for babad). A similar statement, also made in a conversation, this time in the early 1810s, between the author of the *Babad Bĕdhah ing Ngayogyakarta* and his elder brother, typifies the British as people who "would always seek their own advantage" (Carey n.d.: 18, drawing on Canto 14.16–18 of the babad). Such statements are too incidental, of course, to be attributed much value, yet they are interesting in connection with the present discussion, all the more so as they are made at crucial points in Javanese history. An overall interpretation of the texts concerned is needed in order to avoid the danger of citing out of context, besides making more texts accessible for research.

5.3 *Attitude*

The third clue as to who the Makassarese and their king are, or what they stand for, as well as outward appearance and open or secret intentions, is attitude, more specifically receptiveness to Javanese culture: the recent hostilities being what they are, the Makassarese are interested in Javanese literature, or at least the prime minister is. The texts he reads belong to the canon: the Mintaraga, the Bratayuda, the Ramayana. The first one is a text about the austerities of Arjuna to prepare himself for the great war, which is the subject of the second one. (The Ramayana has already been summarized above.) It is through these texts that the prime minister becomes aware of the special position of the Javanese: they are the favorites of the gods, because Arjuna was the favorite of the gods and the Javanese are his descendants. The lesson is: Arjuna was victorious in the Bratayuda, so the Javanese will be victorious in the war the Makassarese king is about to launch. Likewise, it is not advisable to take away the wife of the Javanese crown prince; see what happened to Rawana.

How should the reader of the *Panji Paniba* interpret this preoccupation with Javanese literature? There is no historical evidence of a Makassarese interest in Javanese literature, but there was an interest elsewhere: for ages in Bali and, very recently, among Europeans in Java, among the Dutch and the British. Leaving aside the Balinese who have no role in the story, I wonder whether the author is hinting once more at the Europeans. Analogous to what we are told about Makassar, it was the upper layer of European society in Java, not the ordinary Europeans, who showed this interest: ministers like Josua van Iperen, one of the founders of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Batavian Society of the Arts and Sciences), administrators like John Crawfurd, Resident of Yogyakarta, even the Lieutenant Governor himself, Thomas Stamford Raffles. A detail worth mentioning in this connection is that the Makassarese king, making fun of the prime minister and his Javanese books, does not use a Javanese word for "book" but the rare Dutch loanword *ĕbuk* (he says: *ngandhut layang Bratayuda gembol ĕbuk*, "with a Bratayuda stuffed under your shirt"; Canto 4.16).

Reviewing the results of this search for identity, it seems that "European" or "Dutch" or "British" would stand a good chance as a substitute for what is allegorically referred to as "Makassarese."

There are still other indications in evidence, which, however, are equally ambiguous. For example, the Makassarese king, when receiving important guests, has them sit on chairs, while alcohol flows freely (Canto 35.27–28). Sitting on chairs was not the custom in Indonesia in the past, except for kings; it only spread after it had been introduced by the Europeans. Drinking

alcohol admittedly was by no means limited to Europeans; spirits are traditionally known all over Indonesia. Nor did the drinks mentioned in the *Panji Paniba* – wine, jenever, brandy – brought to Indonesia by Europeans, remain an exclusively European prerogative. On the other hand, drinking and the types of beverages certainly fit the European image.

No less significant, I think, is the characteristic of the Makassarese as coming from overseas. Often, if not always, in Panji stories there is a foreign kingdom attacking the Javanese. Usually, these foreign kingdoms are located in Java, but some happen to be overseas realms. Whether coming from overseas is a distinctive feature or not, in light of the present discussion it is more than a narrative coincidence: it is a condition, if for "Makassarese" we are to read "European."

If these arguments to read "Europe" for "Makassar" make sense, they would shed new light on the Makassarese king refusing to join the *sayĕmbara* (the contest on behalf of the vanished princess), as he will – see the next section. In his claim to her, to the exclusion of the other participants of the *sayĕmbara*, contemporaneous readers may have recognized the monopolistic efforts of the Dutch East India Company, the VOC. The same context would explain the remark about presents with strings attached, made by the sister of the Javanese king.

Hypothesizing about the author's intentions will never reach the stage of certainty; the best one can hope for is probability. But then, this is inherent in allegories. They have to allow for ambiguity, in order to be allegories.

5.4 *Values*

The narrative similarity, in certain respects, of the *Panji Paniba* to the story of Rama and Sinta evoked two questions: what is the real identity of its protagonists, and which are the values underlying the conflict between the Makassarese and the Javanese? The first question was addressed in the first sub-sections of this section. Let us now turn to the second question.

For the time being trust prevails at the Javanese court, after the Makassarese diplomats have left again, notwithstanding the critical remarks of the king's sister. In Makassar, however, the king considers the story about the vanished princess as a rejection, and furiously takes up arms against Kediri. Soon a large fleet sails for Java. The news of the hostile attack only reaches the Javanese court after the first clashes on Javanese soil have taken place and the first deaths and injuries have occurred.

Curiously, what worries the Javanese in the first place is not the attack, but the fact that the king of Makassar sets foot on Javanese soil without prior notice. We learn this from a dialogue between two Javanese princes discussing

the new situation. It follows that entering the country without prior notice is illegal and is considered an attack; underlying this view is the idea that there is someone to whom to report, someone who is in charge of the country. It is the king, not surprisingly, who is in charge (Canto 39.56–57):

kakang mas langkung prayogi	Dear brother, your proposal
ing karsa nĕdya rok pupoh	of attacking and fighting makes much sense,
dhatĕngipun ing ngriki tan asung wĕruh	in view of their coming without prior notice
maring kang gadhah nagari	to the suzerain,
rama tuwan sang aprabu	your father the king.

The Javanese expression translated here as "the suzerain" is *kang gadhah nagari*, literally "the one who owns the country." The verb *gadhah* "to own" is unusual in this context. There are several verbs available in Javanese to refer to the business of ruling, such as *madĕg* or *mĕngku*. These verbs have a literal meaning which in a metaphorical way allows for the meaning of "reigning." *Madĕg* literally means "to be established," *mĕngku* literally means "to frame something." Why choose *gadhah* "to own," which is never used in the sense of "to reign"? The reason may be that the author wishes to exclude any idea of vassalage or subordination. *Madĕg* and *mĕngku* are neutral in this respect. *Gadhah*, however, excludes higher authority (such as a colonial government). *Kang gadhah nagari* refers to the owner of the country like *kang gadhah griya* refers to the owner of a house, who has the exclusive right to it, whom one asks for permission to enter lest one be a trespasser. Please note the stoical tone of the passage. To call the sudden attack by hundreds of Makassarese their *dhatĕng*, their "coming," is quite an understatement. I guess irony is intended.

In fact, what the prince is talking about is sovereignty. Although the concept of sovereignty is not mentioned, he identifies the core of the matter: the king is entitled to say yes or no, fully, finally and alone, without being answerable to anyone else. Foreigners are welcome – indiscriminately; see the spontaneous invitation for the *sayĕmbara* with its precious stake, no matter what they look like – provided they politely use the entrance. They can lay no claims; they are guests who should knock on the door and have to submit to the will of the ruler. If we are looking for the values underlying the conflict between Makassar and Java: this is it. The conflict is about the princess, but more fundamental is the king of Makassar's challenging the authority of the Javanese king. It is easy to see what this means if transposed to the time of the author.

The three classic studies on traditional Javanese statecraft, Schrieke 1957, Moertono 1968 and Miyazaki 1988, discuss the divinely inspired legitimacy of kingship, the administration and geographic divisions, and the relationship between ruler and ruled, besides other topics. However, none of them mentions the idea of "ownership" of a country, in the sense of sovereignty. The absence of this concept from these three studies and their Javanese sources suggests that it was irrelevant in the political situation prior to 1800. However, around 1817, on the threshold of a new era, of Dutch colonialism, it had become acutely relevant. With no tradition to fall back on, the author of the *Panji Paniba* coined a term of his own to describe the current events.

6 Further Questions

My analysis of the *Panji Paniba* raises a couple of new questions. One is: why write an allegory in poetry, if one has something critical to say on such an important subject as the usurpation of power? Would not the message come through more clearly if worded as a clear-cut, straightforward text in prose?

A reason for using poetry may be access: how to reach the intended audience. Unlike in Europe, in 1817 newspapers or pamphlets to air one's views were unknown in Javanese society (the first example of political propaganda addressing a Javanese readership I have seen appeared in a newspaper of 1829, directed against Dipanagara. See De Kock 1829). Prose was a rare medium at the time, popular in the domain of religion, but not much in use outside it. If aiming at a larger audience, the obvious channels would be theater and literature. One can imagine that theater (such as shadow theater) was used for political purposes in those days, if only as a way of release, but unfortunately it did not leave a trace. Literature in Java by definition meant poetry. Much traditional Javanese poetry was narrative and therefore, unlike modern lyrical poetry, not necessarily ambiguous or difficult to understand (even though such poetry did have its problematical passages). So, a literary format was not an obstacle for the audience to get the message – on the contrary, it was the format people would expect. The same goes for allegories: the Javanese had had enough training, for centuries, to be able to face an allegory in 1817 with the required sophistication. A reason for applying the genre of allegory may have been safety; after all, the author was targeting the powers that be.

One might wonder why the poor Makassarese were selected for the role of the scapegoat. One reason has been mentioned already: the author needed a nation from overseas if he were to allude to Europe successfully. Another

reason could be that the Makassarese had a history of raiding Java in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so putting them in the position of an enemy would make sense to the reader (see the babads referred to in the previous section and also Ricklefs 2001: 96). A related question in this connection is: why call the Makassarese foreigners; aren't they Indonesian as much as the Javanese? The answer is: nowadays they are, but in 1817 Indonesia did not yet exist. At a time when the distance between Java and Makassar was expressed in days rather than hours, and contacts were in any case far less frequent, the relationship was less close – let alone before that time, in the Middle Ages, which forms the chronological setting of the *Panji Paniba*. So calling the Makassarese foreigners (and vice versa) would not have been strange at the time. Throughout the text when referring to Makassarese court or military hierarchy the narrator uses Javanese terminology, such as *patih* for the prime minister or *tumĕnggung* for officers of some high rank. This is how foreign habits and traditions are translated into concepts which are familiar to the readers at home, in the days of the *Panji Paniba* no different from now.

Another question is: why choose the Hindu past as a context for the allegory? Is there a shortage of historical material of an Islamic nature? (Saying that a Hindu past is implied in the choice of a Panji story would shift the question, not answer it.) The answer may have to do with the focus of the author's criticism. If the Islamic past had been chosen as a context, this could have blurred the author's focus, by raising religion-related problems of believers and unbelievers, thus thwarting the desired discussion about a problem of statecraft. Precluding the wrong discussion by opting for a distant past with a different religious context cleared the way for the correct focus.

The Javano-Makassarese war in the *Panji Paniba* ends with the victory of the Javanese over the Makassarese. This is not what happened in history, if we take "Makassar" to stand for "Europe." How are we to reconcile literary and historical truth? Where the new developments would lead in the course of the nineteenth century was not yet clear in 1817 and was actually only decided fifteen years later (by the Java War of 1825–30). Nevertheless, the author has to say something about the still unknown future – call it "hope." He puts what he has to say in the mouth of the enemy, that is, the prime minister of Makassar, the same character who opposed the king's evil plans. The prime minister keeps imploring his master not to attack the Javanese. He admits the possibility of a Makassarese victory, but this, he warns, should not be accepted for what it would seem. Because, whatever one might imagine, God is on the side of the Javanese (*siniyan ing batharane* "[the Javanese] enjoy divine favor"; canto 1.4); victory could only be temporary (*sĕtun inggih sagĕd unggul / angger amung*

sakĕdhap; canto 17.27). In the end the once-victorious foreigner will find himself on the wrong side of history (Canto 17.32–33):

tan lyan mung paduka gusti	No one other than you
ingkang cinacad ing jagat	will be blamed by the world.

It seems a peculiar coincidence of history that the same idea of eventual blame after initial victory would be formulated by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2005, in a belated acknowledgement of the course of history: "In retrospect, it is clear that its large-scale deployment of military forces in 1947 put the Netherlands on the wrong side of history" (Bot 2005). The minister is referring to the violence which accompanied the dissolution of the Dutch East Indies. The *Panji Paniba*, written at the very beginning of this regime, in 1817, predicts what Bot was to admit almost two centuries later, in near-identical words.

7 Concluding Remarks

The *Panji Paniba*, a Javanese text of 1817, is one version among many about the adventures of Panji looking for his lost fiancée. We can read it as a story about the difficulties the male and female heroes have to overcome before they are united with each other and are able to marry. However, the text opens the possibility of an interpretation at a deeper level, surpassing the interests of Panji and Sĕkartaji and looking at the interests of Java. We read about statecraft and the sovereignty of Java, and the infringement of its sovereignty by foreign intruders.

The reader is alerted to this possibility, of an interpretation of the *Panji Paniba* at a deeper level, by a particular transition in the narrative. This particular transition, I hypothesize, was borrowed from the story of Rama and Sinta exactly for that purpose. The epic, besides being a love story of separation and reunion, at a deeper level is also a story about the universal conflict between good and evil. If my hypothesis is correct, then we should ask how this works in the case of the *Panji Paniba*: who or what is it that the enemy of Java stands for, and which evil is it that the author wishes to bring to our attention?

My analysis of the *Panji Paniba* leads me to the conclusion that the text is an allegory informed by historical events taking place in 1816, in which the Makassarese – the enemy – stand for Europeans. Their intended identity can be inferred from a number of characteristics ascribed to the Makassarese but

in fact found not – or not exclusively – with the Makassarese but with – or also with – the Dutch and the British. Unlike the story of Rama and Sinta, the *Panji Paniba* addresses a conflict not of universal but, more down to earth, of Javanese dimensions, of a Java on the verge of being turned into a colony of foreign countries. Contrary to the claims of Dutch historiography, "the indigenous inhabitants" did voice their opinion – it would have been strange indeed if they had not. The text testifies to a deep concern about what was happening on Javanese soil in 1816. At the same time, it illustrates what is to be gained by listening to the Javanese voice when studying Javanese history.[7]

The Javanese being victorious, as the text has it, is at odds with historical reality in 1816. It is with this reality in mind that the author stresses that foreign triumph will be finite, as God is on the Javanese side; in the end the oppressor will find himself blamed by the whole world. The author saw this correctly; his confidence was warranted. Even the enemy agrees.

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7 Where the use of literary sources in Javanese can lead is shown by Ricklefs in his contribution to this volume, on the study of historical Islam in Java. He connects a change of paradigm with it.

/532/Volledige%20toespraak%20van%20minister%20Ben%20Bot.html (last accessed on October 5, 2021).

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CHAPTER 10

Rethinking Categorization in Javanese Literary History: Some Reflections on a Fin-de-Siècle Memoir by Raden Sasrakusuma

Edwin P. Wieringa

Abstract

Raden Sasrakusuma (b. 1848) was a teacher and well-published writer who at the request of his first-born child, namely Raden Sasrasuganda, also a teacher and well-published writer, wrote a first-hand account of his life, entitled *Layang Raga Pasaja* (Book of My Unadorned Self), penned in intervals between 1901 and 1906. Although this memoir is classified in academic literature as an early example of modern, Western-influenced Javanese literature, it only had a most limited circulation, known to only a few people. In fact, it is only on account of a few Dutch Javanologists who happened to have access to a Romanized copy of Sasrakusuma's reminiscences that his text became part of the canon of modern Javanese literature. This chapter argues that the existent categorization of Sasrakusuma's narrative as a supposedly unique and innovative autobiography should be problematized, advocating to understand Javanese literature on its own terms, looking beyond the narrow confinements of "biography and history" with Western and modern biases.

Keywords

life-history – self-representation – biography and history – Orientalist legacy – manuscript-collecting – Leiden University Library – modernity – Javanese literature

1 Introduction[1]

The present chapter is informed by the self-evident idea that studying "new," that is, hitherto unexplored, texts, will not only broaden our knowledge but also

1 For helpful comments during joint readings of sections of the LRP and valuable suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay, I thank the other members of the research group "New

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may cause us to rethink what we think we know. I want to illustrate this point by reconsidering some taken-for-granted ideas about a Javanese text that is classified in secondary literature as belonging to "modern Javanese literature," namely Raden Sasrakusuma's *Layang Raga Pasaja* (Book of My Unadorned Self; abbreviated as LRP), containing his personal memories (Figure 10.1). Is it really that "modern" and would its writer have considered it as "literature"?

Sasrakusuma's autograph is unknown, but the first-hand account of his life first entered the halls of Dutch Javanology when, in December 1931, Theodoor G.Th. Pigeaud (1899–1988) received a typescript romanization of it (in Surakarta) from the Protestant missionary Hendrik Kraemer (1888–1965), a fellow Leiden-trained Javanologist. In his capacity as *taalambtenaar* (government linguist), Pigeaud was an avid collector of manuscripts and transcriptions, which served as a corpus for his Javanese-Dutch dictionary project. The typescript is a romanization of Sasrakusuma's text with corrections and marginal additions, giving the page numbers of the original text in the margins.[2] As was usual in Pigeaud's wordsmithy, the typescript is full of pencil markings as the text was combed through in search of words for the dictionary project (Figure 10.2).

The transcription was based on a printed text in Javanese characters which displayed several imperfections at the beginning; the first part (LRP 1: 1, 3–4, 20, 23, 32, and 87) has some dotted passages, indicating lacunae in the text, most probably due to legibility problems (Figure 10.2). As Sasrakusuma makes clear on the final and concluding page (LRP 4: 20), the printing was begun with equipment ordered from the Netherlands, but he was disappointed with the quality of the print which was "unclear" (*ora cětha*, LRP 4: 20). Hence, Sasrakusuma printed the rest of his life-story with the help of new equipment, which cost little, was easy to use, and produced clear results (LRP 4: 20).[3] Having taken the publication into his own hands, Sasrakusuma appears to have been a self-publishing author, but nothing is further known to me about the LRP in print.

Directions in the Study of Javanese Literature," especially (in alphabetical order) Ben Arps, Els Bogaerts, Tony Day, Nancy Florida, Ronit Ricci, and Willem van der Molen.

2 I will only refer to the page numbers of the romanization. The spelling of all citations has been modernized.

3 As Willem van der Molen points out, a printing set of types is rather expensive and only economically interesting for persons (or rather companies) with professional intentions, so perhaps Sasrakusuma was referring to the cheaper alternative of lithography (personal communication). The romanization does not mention a printer's imprint or any other paratextual data involving printed matter.

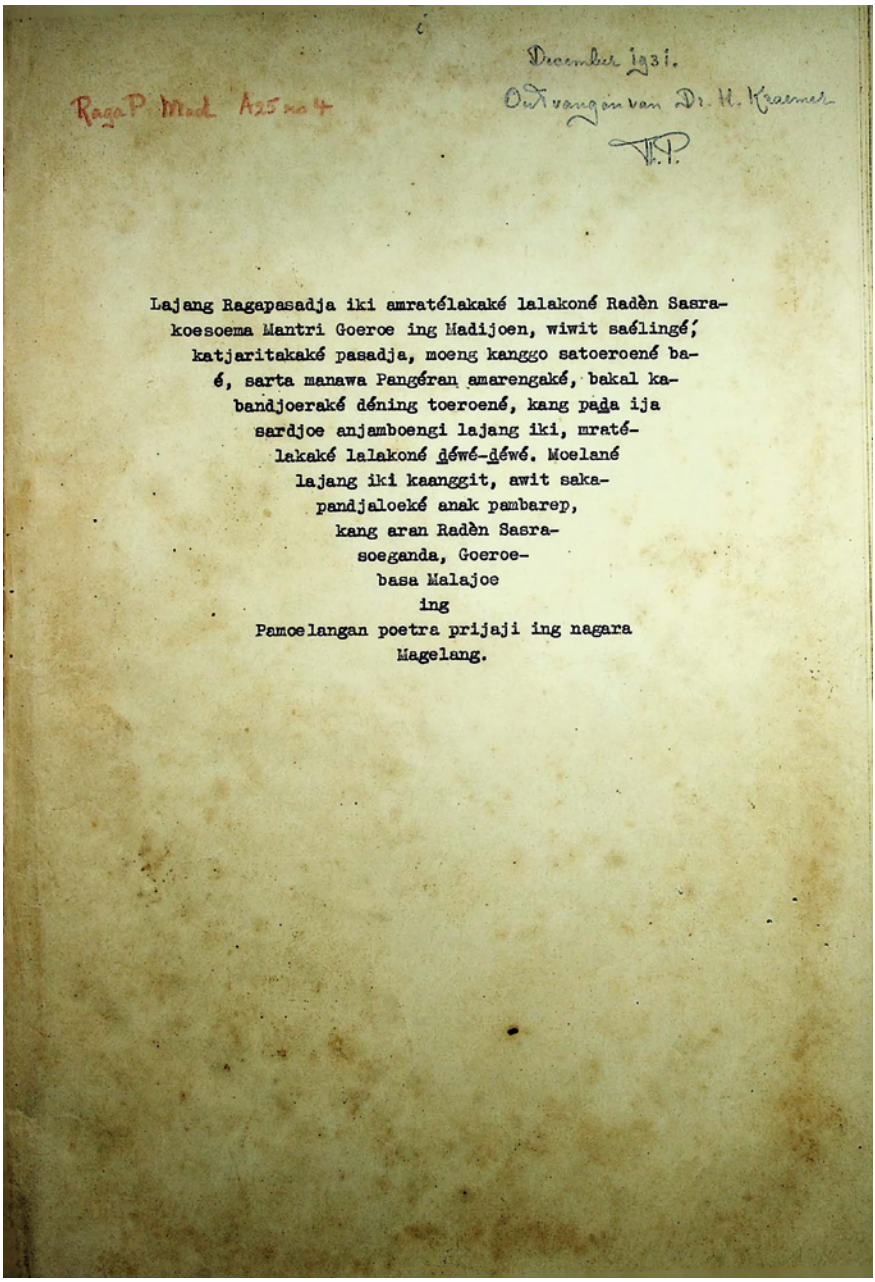
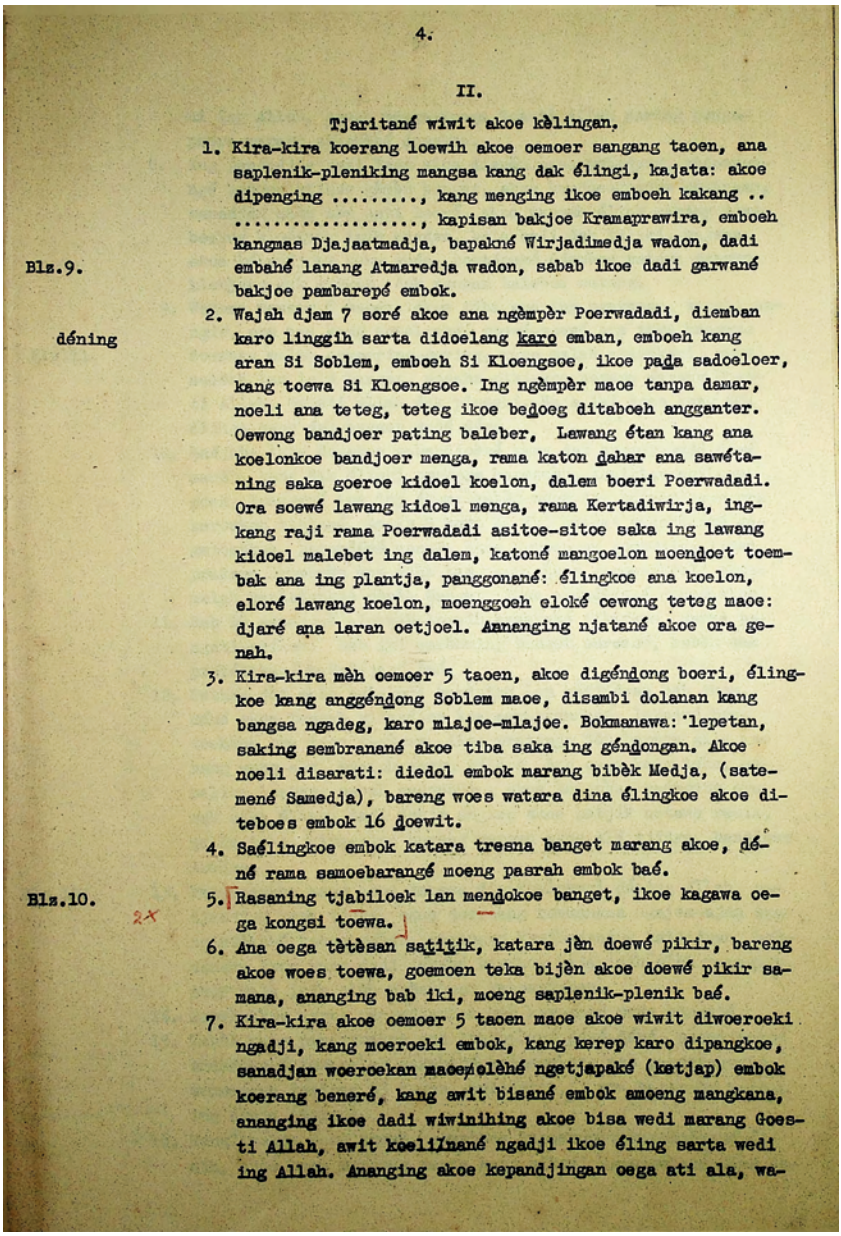

December 1931.
Ontvangen van Dr. H. Kraemer
Raga P Mad A25 no 4
Lajang Ragapasadja iki amratélakaké lalakoné Radèn Sasra-
koesoema Mantri Goeroe ing Madijoen, wiwit saélingé;
katjaritakaké pasadja, moeng kanggo satoeroené ba-
é, sarta manawa Pangéran amarengaké, bakal ka-
bandjoeraké déning toeroené, kang pada ija
sardjoe anjamboengi lajang iki, mraté-
lakaké lalakoné déwé-déwé. Moelané
lajang iki kaanggit, awit saka-
pandjaloeké anak pambarep,
kang aran Radèn Sasra-
soeganda, Goeroe-
basa Malajoe
ing
Pamoelangan poetra prijaji ing nagara
Magelang.

FIGURE 10.1 Title or cover page of the *Layang Raga Pasaja*. The pencilled note at the top, in the unmistakable hand of Th(edoor) P(igeaud), mentions that the copy was received in December 1931 from Dr. H. Kraemer. Pigeaud categorized, in orange pencil, "Raga P(asaja) Mad(iun)" as "A25 no 4."
FAKULTAS SASTRA UNIVERSITAS, INDONESIA, DEPOK, MS. A 25.04



4.

II.

Tjaritané wiwit akoe kèlingan.

1. Kira-kira koerang loewih akoe oemoer sangang taoen, ana saplenik-pleniking mangsa kang dak élingi, kajata: akoe dipenging ....., kang menging ikoe emboeh kakang .. .., kapisan bakjoe Kramaprawira, emboeh kangmas Djajaatmadja, bapaknè Wirjadimedja wadon, dadi
Blz.9. embahé lanang Atmaredja wadon, sabab ikoe dadi garwané bakjoe pambarepé embok.
2. Wajah djam 7 soré akoe ana ngèmpèr Poerwadadi, diemban
déning karo linggih sarta didoelang karo emban, emboeh kang aran Si Soblem, emboeh Si Kloengsoe, ikoe pada sadoeloer, kang toewa Si Kloengsoe. Ing ngèmpèr maoe tanpa damar, noeli ana teteg, teteg ikoe bedoeg ditaboeh angganter. Oewong bandjoer pating baleber, Lawang étan kang ana koelonkoe bandjoer menga, rama katon dahar ana sawétaning saka goeroe kidoel koelon, dalem boeri Poerwadadi. Ora soewé lawang kidoel menga, rama Kertadiwirja, ingkang raji rama Poerwadadi asitoe-sitoe saka ing lawang kidoel malebet ing dalem, katoné mangoelon moendoet toembak ana ing plantja, panggonané: élingkoe ana koelon, eloré lawang koelon, moenggoeh eloké oewong teteg maoe: djaré ana laran oetjoel. Ananging njatané akoe ora genah.
3. Kira-kira mèh oemoer 5 taoen, akoe digéndong boeri, élingkoe kang anggéndong Soblem maoe, disambi dolanan kang bangsa ngadeg, karo mlajoe-mlajoe. Bokmanawa: 'lepetan, saking sembranané akoe tiba saka ing géndongan. Akoe noeli disarati: diedol embok marang bibèk Medja, (satemené Samedja), bareng woes watara dina élingkoe akoe diteboes embok 16 doewit.
4. Saélingkoe embok katara tresna banget marang akoe, dénè rama samoebarangé moeng pasrah embok baé.
Blz.10. 5. [Rasaning tjabiloek lan mendokoe banget, ikoe kagawa oega kongsi toewa.] 2×
6. Ana oega tètèsan satitik, katara jèn doewé pikir, bareng akoe woes toewa, goemoen teka bijèn akoe doewé pikir samana, ananging bab iki, moeng saplenik-plenik baé.
7. Kira-kira akoe oemoer 5 taoen maoe akoe wiwit diwoeroeki ngadji, kang moeroeki embok, kang kerep karo dipangkoe, sanadjan woeroekan maoe élèhé ngetjapaké (ketjap) embok koerang beneré, kang awit bisané embok amoeng mangkana, ananging ikoe dadi wiwinihing akoe bisa wedi marang Goesti Allah, awit koeliné ngadji ikoe éling sarta wedi ing Allah. Ananging akoe kepandjingan oega ati ala, wa-

FIGURE 10.2 The LRP was read "robotically" by Pigeaud's team of dictionary-makers, transmuting the text into many index cards recording the appearance of certain words. Here the sentence "Rasaning (...) toewa" is placed between square brackets, while the marginal note "2×" indicates that two words are of lexicographical interest, namely "tjabiloek" and "mendo(koe)." The text has lacunae in the first paragraph, indicated by dots.
FAKULTAS SASTRA UNIVERSITAS INDONESIA, DEPOK, MS. A 25.04: 4

For a long time, the LRP remained a well-kept secret in Javanology as it was not mentioned among the listings of Pigeaud's items.[4] In 1942, "when the original collector lost control of the books and papers in consequence of the outbreak of the war" (Pigeaud 1970: 139), Pigeaud's complete working library seemed to have disappeared. However, it had just changed hands and made its way to Jakarta where, from this time on, it was incorporated into the library of the Faculty of Humanities of the Universitas Indonesia. It was only in 1970, with the publication of Pigeaud's third volume of his catalogue of Javanese manuscripts in the Netherlands, that we encounter his former possession as part of "THP Coll.A" of the "Fakultas Sastra, Jakarta," listed as item 4 under "A-25, 1931" (Pigeaud 1970: 146). However, this information is tucked away in an appendix, and is not retrievable through the index (Pigeaud 1970), nor are any references made to it in Pigeaud's discussion of a second copy of the LRP in the other two volumes of his catalogue.[5] As it turned out, Kraemer had kept a duplicate, which entered Leiden University Library (LUL) in 1963, where it is kept under call number Cod. Or. 10.842.[6] It was transferred thereto from the Library of the Protestant Missionary College in Oegstgeest, together with a few dozen other Javanese manuscripts.

The discussion in the following pages revolves around a puzzle, namely: how can it be that this work, which was an obscure private family document, came to be regarded in Javanology as a prime example of modern, Western-influenced autobiographical literature? Rethinking categorization in Javanese literary history, this chapter is structured in the following way: I will start with the question of canon formation, emphasizing that Sasrakusuma solely secured posthumous plaudits from the fact that his LRP was canonized in two most influential general reference works, namely Pigeaud 1967 and Ras 1979. Sharing an approach, which was basically taxonomic and cataloguing in nature, both scholars were Leiden-trained Dutch philologists, who strongly relied upon the Javanese collection in Leiden, paying little or no attention to

4 Serially published in pre-war issues of the Yearbook of the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (Behrend 1988: 30).

5 Having relied too much on the index and description of Cod. Or. 10.842 of Pigeaud's catalogue, I only became aware of Pigeaud's own copy in Jakarta at a very late stage of my research. Thankfully, through the most kind and swift intermediary of Titik Pudjiastuti, professor of Indonesian philology at the Universitas Indonesia, a PDF copy of it was delivered to my e-mail account (on August 12, 2021).

6 Enclosed in the sheaf with unbound pages is a note on the structure of the text, made on September 10, 1974, perhaps by Soegiarto. Because of misplacement of the papers in Kraemer's copy, this note wrongly states that pp. 101–04 of volume 1 were missing, but in fact they can be found after the pages of volume 2. Furthermore, there is no volume 5, pp. 21–22, which "begins abrupt[ly]," because these two pages simply belong to volume 3. However, Kraemer's copy only has pp. 11–20 of volume 3.

collections elsewhere in the world. Next, I will interrogate the terms "modern" and "literature" by looking into Sasrakusuma's complete oeuvre, arguing that the use of prose as medium for the LRP suggest that this work did not count for him (or his contemporaries) as "literature," and that Sasrakusuma's specimen of a supposedly "innovative" literary genre of (auto)biography was strongly rooted in older indigenous rhetorical traditions. I then turn to the issue of provenance and collecting histories: it cannot be emphasized enough that we only know about Sasrakusuma's reminiscences because one Dutchman, namely Hendrik Kraemer, happened to be interested in it. In order to understand what the LRP is all about, I take a closer look at its contents, providing a glimpse into Sasrakusuma's life as told by himself. Finally, I will review the problem of establishing the genre to which Sasrakusuma's "unusual" or even "unique" LRP belongs.

2 The Perspective from Leiden: Leiden University Library and Leiden Scholarship

The LRP is briefly mentioned by Ras (1979: 9), in his discussion of the emergence of modern Javanese literature, where he calls it one of the earliest "examples of works outside the tradition of classical literature." According to Ras (1979: 9), who repeats Pigeaud's brief description almost verbatim (Pigeaud 1968: 673), this text "contains autobiographical notes written in informal prose (*ngoko*) by Radèn Sasra Kusuma, a school-teacher [*sic*], for the benefit of his son who was also a teacher." Ras (2014: 299) states that the new genre of life histories was created by a new class of litterateurs, generally with a professional background as teachers and journalists, who voiced their own thoughts and feelings. However, Ras (1979: 9) could only muster very few examples, suggesting that these works were "directly inspired by European ideas." Ras's brief discussion has been adopted in Indonesia, and hence Sasrakusuma is pegged as one of the writers of the "transitional period," denoting the time in between the "classical" and "modern" eras, and consequently listed among the earliest Javanese autobiographical writers (Sri Widati et al. 2001: 25). Hitherto, however, Sasrakusuma's autobiographical notes have not sparked any further academic interest.

It is worth registering that Ras's account of Javanese (auto)biographies faithfully echoes the section on "Javanese Biographies" in Pigeaud (1967: 171–72) along with the latter's corresponding catalogue descriptions of the cited Javanese texts. The rather meagre harvest of Javanese life stories available in the Netherlands induced Pigeaud to conclude that although "[m]any

Javanese historical texts contain biographical elements, (…) the idea of writing a book solely on the life of one man and that not even a King, seems *alien to the spirit of Javanese literature*, which is not interested in individuals but in social and cosmic order" (Pigeaud 1967: 171; my emphasis). Totally oblivious of the colonial background of Leiden's holdings, Pigeaud solely based his most generalizing assessment on findings in this one repository only, and the disappointing result nicely confirmed two popular Orientalist stereotypes of essentializing, namely (1) the notion of non-existence of individuals in Java; and (2) the idea that Javanese society and culture is essentially concerned with balance and harmony.[7]

However, the Leiden holdings cannot possibly provide a complete and veritable representation of Javanese literature.[8] Apart from the unavoidable blind spots, it is perhaps more important to observe that using a colonial archive may easily and unreflexively perpetuate the ongoing effects of colonial thinking which tends to over-emphasize the role of the colonizer. This colonially-blinkered vision is revealed in the Orientalist belief that (auto)biographical writing would be intrinsically un-Javanese, with the corollary that this "anomalous" literature had to be the result of European influence, which was at its strongest in Java during the high colonial period from the late nineteenth century onwards.

3 The Oeuvre of Sasrakusuma

There is no denying that Sasrakusuma stood in close contact with Europeans. In fact, he was a well-published author, whose work was brought out by the Dutch colonial government. Perusing catalogues of manuscripts and printed works shows that he was a teacher who was continuously churning out learning material for elementary school children, mainly on arithmetic, natural science, and Javanese language. All these textbooks are in prose and do not normally count as capital-l-literature.

However, Sasrakusuma also wrote a narrative poem in *tĕmbang*, published by the Dutch government-sponsored publishing press of modern books, Volkslectuur (Popular Literature), entitled *Dongeng Kuna* ("Old Fairy Tale,"

7 Drewes's sweeping overview (Drewes 1951) belongs to the same school of thought, falling into the same confirmation bias. Compare Binder (2020: 72) for similar popular and academic representations of India.

8 See also Behrend (1988: 23–25) for structural weaknesses of the colonial collections in Leiden (and Batavia/Jakarta).

1917), which is about two sisters who embody good and evil, ending with the moral lesson for children not to be envious of other's good fortunes (Poerwa Soewignja and Wirawangs 1921: 467–68; Girardet et al. 1983: 426). This children's literature could also be regarded as belonging to the realm of elementary school education. In the same year, Sasrakusuma also published another narrative poem in tĕmbang with Volkslectuur, namely *Carita Lĕlampahane Nabi Yusup* ("The Life-story of the Prophet Joseph"), but contrary to what the title might suggest, it is not about the Islamic Prophet Yūsuf, but based upon the Biblical story, or as it is phrased in the opening lines: "A story from the Torah is selected / to set a guideline" (*Crita saka Toret dipunpĕtik / kinarya papathok*). The Joseph story happened to be very popular among European missionaries in their attempts to win over Indonesian Muslims to the Christian faith (Wieringa 2017: 453ff.), but Sasrakusuma's rendition seems to have been intended to provide a basic moral lesson, once again of good pitted against evil, thus mirroring his Old Fairy Tale, which also deals with sibling rivalry and jealousy. As we will see (below), the basic storyline of good vanquishing evil in a battle of vices vs virtues is also the main theme of the LRP.

Sasrakusuma started his work within "the tradition of classical literature" at a relatively early age, when he was a teacher-trainee. As he informs us in his memoir, his first earnings as a writer were for a collection of riddles presented to the Dutch scholar Cohen Stuart (*Kohen Sĕtiwar*), who paid him twenty guilders for it, and published it in the Javanese Almanac, which the latter edited.[9] This publication can be identified as *Sĕrat Pananggalan* (*Javaansche Almanak*), number 17 of the year 1870, published by Van Dorp & Co. in Semarang, which contains "68 riddles collected by R.Ng. Sasrakoesoema" (Uhlenbeck 1964: 102). He furthermore received fifty guilders from Cohen Stuart for the earliest Javanese versified version of "The butterfly lovers" (Chinese: *Liang Zhu*), known in Javanese as *Sam Pik Ing Tae*, which was published in 1873 in the same Javanese Almanac.[10] In Sasrakusuma's student period, which coincided with

9 For a brief biography of Abraham Benjamin Cohen Stuart (1825–76), see Anonymous 1917a: 496–97.

10 Sasrakusuma mentions that he wrote it around 1868 (LRP 1: 11). His adaptation also served as a kind of "rules" (*pathokan*) of tĕmbang versification: Mas Wirarĕja, "head teacher" (*hup guru*) in Ngawi, once told him that he had memorized Sasrakusuma's narrative poem almost completely (LRP 1: 11). Jan Brandes, who does not mention the identity of the van Dorp recension, gives a full summary of it in a footnote (Brandes 1902: 264–65 n. 1). George Quinn (2013: 339), who did not know the identity of the person behind this earliest Javanese version of the *Liang Zhu*, hypothesized that its translator was "probably Peranakan Chinese."

his first foray in publishing, contacts with Dutch colonial authorities also led to the commissioned translation of a more mundane book, dealing with the planting of maize and the keeping of (live) freshwater fish (LRP 1: 54).

Every writer begins as a reader, and Winter's prose translations of Dutch schoolbooks in particular made a great impact upon the young Sasrakusuma, who writes glowingly that although he had never met "Mister Winter" (*Tuwan Wintĕr*) in person, he considered him as his true teacher, who shaped his thoughts and whom he wished to emulate (LRP 1: 55). This Dutchman was none other than Carel Frederik Winter (Senior) (1799–1859) whose list of publications is truly impressive. The Book of Strange Stories (*Layang Carita Aneh*), which Sasrakusuma explicitly mentions among Winter's works, must be the Javanese translation of a Dutch collection of short stories for children, some of which were taken from the tall tales of Baron Munchausen (Ricklefs 2007: 142; Robson 2009: 1078).

Intriguingly, Sasrakusuma categorizes Winter's books as "really only trivial." Given Sasrakusuma's confession of great appreciation of Winter, this may sound like an unexpected and paradoxical put-down, but I think that the characterization as "trivial, insignificant, of little worth" (*remeh-remeh*) expressed a valuation on literary grounds of Winter's prose schoolbook materials for a lowbrow audience, which belonged to another category than that of acclaimed "classical" Javanese literature. Traditionally, tĕmbang was synonymous with high literature, whereas plain prose was not deemed suitable for literary purposes. It has been said that the aristocratic and bureaucratic class of *priyayi* (to which Sasrakusuma belonged) generally looked down upon modern Javanese prose literature, mocking it as children's literature without literary value in contrast to the lofty "classical" Javanese poetry, composed by kings and court poets (Imam Budi Utomo et al. 2002: 4 n. 2).

Sasrakusuma's services to the colonial government notwithstanding, his memoir was not commissioned by any European. Why did he write this work, then? Its cover page (Figure 10.1) contains the following information:

> This book (*Layang*) *Raga Pasaja* informs about the biography of Raden Sasrakusuma, school superintendent in Madiun, for as long as he can remember, frankly told, only for his descendants, but if the Lord permits it, it will be continued by his descendants who have agreed to go on with this book, telling about their own biographies. The reason why this book is written is because my first-born child, who is called Raden Sasrasuganda and is teacher of the Malay language at the chiefs' school in Magelang, asked for it.

I have little biographical information about Raden Sasrasuganda, but in any case, he followed in his father's footsteps as teacher and well-published writer.[11] His best-known work is his *Kĕkesahan dhatĕng Riyo* ("Journey to Riau"), published by Volkslectuur/Balai Pustaka in 1921, which is routinely mentioned among the first modern prose travelogues in Javanese literature. However, as a writer, he seems to have mainly been active in the production of utilitarian literature, especially for the teaching of Malay. Amongst others, Sasrasuganda published a Malay-Javanese dictionary in 1910, whereas his 1910 Malay grammar book was an adaptation of Gerth van Wijk's 1890 Dutch manual of the Malay language (Grijns 1991: 65). Sasrasuganda's learning materials would teach the newly emerging modern Indonesian elite to speak Malay and also greatly influence later Indonesian linguists (Maier 2005: 15 n. 28).

Surveying the oeuvre of Sasrakusuma and Sasrasuganda, there is a strong suggestion that both still adhered to the traditional idea that "literature" was basically the realm of tĕmbang poetry, whereas prose was the default medium for more practically oriented writings. Both writers lived in a period when there was a strong demand for reading materials suitable for government schools (Brugmans 1938: 183–84, 246, 248), and as teachers, they delivered what was needed, earning an extra income on the side.

4 Temporal Exactness and Modernity

According to Suwondo and Mardianto (2001: 59–60), the early Balai Pustaka travelogues are all very realistic documentary reports, providing exact and detailed calendrical details for the factual accounts. It is noteworthy that Sasrakusuma's LRP shares this characteristic. For Western-educated readers, it would be sufficient to know that the work was begun on June 22, 1901, but Sasrakusuma is far more detailed, dating the beginning exactly at half past eleven in the evening, on the evening preceding Sunday and (the market-day) Kliwon, on the fourth of the Javanese (lunar) month Mulud, in the Javanese year Dal, 1831, on the sixth of the Islamic month Rabīʿ al-awwal of the Islamic year 1319; the *wuku* was Watugunung; the *ringkĕl* Uwas, and the *mangsa* Kasa was one day old, coinciding with June 22, 1901 (LRP 1: 1).

11 Suwondo and Mardianto (2001: 10) note that almost nothing is known beyond their names about anyone of the Javanese authors who published with Balai Pustaka in the pre-war period. They provide the culturalist explanation that this is due to a Javanese dislike of "showing off," which in their view is corroborated by the alleged absence of autofiction in Javanese literature.

One way of looking at this insistence on temporal exactness is to connect it to modernity, and hence (unavoidably) European influence. For example, discussing advertisements in Volkslectuur's publications, Doris Jedamski states that "the Western understanding of time was gradually superimposed on the traditional perception of it. Manifested in watches and alarm clocks, the idea of punctuality *slowly* led to fixed working and opening hours, demanding rigid discipline and suggested strictly scheduled days and future planning" (Jedamski 1992: 40; emphasis mine). Jedamski (1992) accuses Balai Pustaka of having been "a colonial wolf in sheep's clothing" and her statement about the Western idea of punctuality to teach the "lazy native" a lesson would seem to fit European colonial prejudices.

Regardless of any possible colonial ideas on the "civilizing mission" of the indigenous population, which may have driven Dutch colonial officials, a counterargument could be put forward that for those on the receiving end of the colonial enterprise, namely for those who wrote the early Balai Pustaka works, other considerations may have played a role here. Contrary to the colonial stereotype of "the" Javanese as easy-going people, who were unbothered about the Western aphorism of "time is money," situating events in time is a highly important matter in Javanese culture. The extremely complex character of the Javanese calendrical system, with its many details about different days, weeks, months, years, and still many other cycles, already indicates its notability. As Ann Kumar (2009) has explained, the concept of "significant time" underlies the Javanese calendar.

Javanese numerology attaches great value to combinations of the different calendar units. In this context, it is telling that Sasrakusuma knows his birthday (*wĕton*), reckoned by combining days from the five-day and seven-day weeks (in other words, the cycle of 35 days, known as the *wĕtonan* cycle). Conversely, he has no information on the exact year of his birth, but, according to his mother, the birthday was on Sunday Lĕgi, in the *wuku* Langkir, whereas "everything else cannot be certified" (*liyane ora bisa gĕnah*).[12] The calendrical element concerning the *wĕtonan* cycle is important for divination, and hence crucial for remembering, but Sasrakusuma does not further comment on its

12 LRP 1: 3. According to his mother, the birth occurred during the "Sumawijayan tumult" in Caruban, but the year is left open in the text with dots. I was unable to identify this local rebellion in East Java. Sasrakusuma adds that his first remembrance of a "Dutch year" began in 1859, when he was "… years old" (left open in the text with dots).

possible meaning.[13] From statements elsewhere in the text, we know that his year of birth was 1848.[14]

Researchers of the first "modern" Javanese travelogues have pointed to the influence of much older Javanese descriptions of wandering and travelling (Bonneff 1986: 33–36; Quinn 1992: 5–8; Bosnak and Koot 2020: 27–32).[15] The meticulous "bookkeeping" of calendrical details, I think, is another example of drawing upon indigenous ways of storytelling, following age-old traditions of an exact chronicling of events, demonstrating that "the Javanese were indubitably people with a sense of history and a capacity to record it" (Ricklefs 1998: 128). Sasrakusuma, who had a lifelong experience of working within the Western-style educational system, was undoubtedly conversant with "modern/Western" concepts of time. However, he not only used Western conventions to temporalize the beginning of his work but supplied many more calendrical details which referred to Javanese (and Islamic) traditions. Perhaps he deemed it an auspicious time for taking up his pen (see below for further discussion of the beginning), but in any case, the suggestion is made that the endeavor was of a certain importance, anchoring it in Javanese conventions of chronicling.

5 Sin and Sexuality, and a Calvinist Colonial Collector

It is due to serendipity that Sasrakusuma's personal and very intimate notes ended up in a public collection, and hence was officially made part of Javanese

13 However, Sasrakusuma mentions that he had the same *wĕton* as Mangkunagara IV (LRP 1: 81). The *Babad Mangkunĕgara* confirms Sunday Lĕgi as the birthday of Prince Mangkunagara (1809–81), which was annually celebrated at his court, and hence well-known (Sumarsam 1995: 92). Furthermore, Sasrakusuma consulted an "almanac" (*almanak*, LRP 2: 6) to find a good day for the wedding of his child. The date was 26 Bĕsar 1832 (LRP 2: 19), and although this is not further elucidated, it is common knowledge that the month of Bĕsar is recommended for marriage. However, apparently practical reasons also played a role for Sasrakusuma, who always seems to have been concerned with finances (a *Leitmotiv* of his LRP): **the afternoon or evening of** 26 Bĕsar 1832, which happened to be **before Sunday**, was considered best because the guests would have to be back in time for work in town.

14 For example, Sasrakusuma uses the phrase "around the year 1860, or when I was twelve years old" (LRP 1: 1), but there are also other references to 1848 as his year of birth, see e.g. LRP 1: 9 and LRP 1: 39.

15 See also Tony Day's contribution in this volume about perhaps the best-known of the so-called "vagrant students' romances," namely the *Cĕnthini*.

literary history, but it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that Sasrakusuma's LRP once attracted Kraemer's professional interest. As a Javanologist with a missionary zeal, Kraemer worked in the Netherlands Indies from 1922 to 1937 (on leave in 1928–29), having a keen interest in Javanese literature. In this period, he collected a substantial number of manuscripts, while his scribbled exercise-books testify to his ardent reading habits.[16] However, Kraemer never seems to have referred to Sasrakusuma's LRP, neither in his publications nor in his personal papers. Yet he made a few marginal annotations at the very beginning of the typescript (LUL Cod. Or. 10.842, pp. 4–6), which seems to suggest that he did not read the text in its entirety. The first noteworthy thing in Kraemer's eyes was the use of a magical means (*sarat*) against an accident (LUL Cod. Or. 10.842, p. 4).[17] On the next page (p. 5), Kraemer noted "scolding God" (*God uitschelden*), committed at the age of six, which refers to Sasrakusuma's great sin of cursing God. Kraemer concluded (on the same page) that Sasrakusuma had heard and seen a lot about sexual matters (*Dus in de jeugd reeds veel gehoord en gezien op sexueel gebied*). This referred to Sasrakusuma's memories from the age of nine and ten, relating about another of his great sins, pertaining to the "matter of love-making" (*prakara karĕsmen*). Kraemer observed (p. 6) that "because of his sexual difficulties and mistakes in his youth, he knows that he later was visited by many disasters" (*Vanwege zijn sexueele moeilijkheden en fouten in de jeugd, weet hij dat hij later bezocht is door veel ongeluk*).

The troubled connection between sexuality and sin in Protestant denominations is too well-known to warrant further discussion, and it seems only natural therefore that the thoughts of a Javanese Muslim on this issue attracted Kraemer's attention. However, Kraemer appears to have made no further notes in the text, although the theme of sinful sexuality, or other sins for that matter, is not restricted to Sasrakusuma's early youth. For example, as a student, he felt very attracted to women, "but did not commit adultery big time" (*nanging ora*

16 For example, his personal papers, which are described in Pigeaud (1970: 121–30), contain many notes on Javanese texts and collectanea.

17 Sasrakusuma recalls in his earliest memories (see Fig. 10.2) that at the age of five, his nursemaid was carrying him in a shawl, but once, in a careless moment, he fell during a certain children's game. Thereupon his mother "applied a means" against the consequences of the mishap by "selling" him to his aunt and "buying" him back after a few days for sixteen cents.

gawe jina gĕdhe).[18] As a young bachelor (probably aged 15–16),[19] kissing was already great for him, after which he returned home to masturbate, when it was "a total body wash [after ejaculation] in the evening; (ritual) prayer (*ṣalāt*) on the morning after" (*bĕngi jinabat esuke salat*).[20] However, Sasrakusuma adds that he took great care of not wasting his semen on the ground as this might have bad consequences.[21] A few years later, after he had been married for about three, four, or five months, Sasrakusuma writes that he committed the sin of whoring, for which he uses the terminology of "to commit adultery with a woman of easy virtue" (*gawe jina karo planyahan*) (LRP 1: 53). If that were not enough, almost in the same breath, he also mentions the sin of gambling (*main*) which beset him at the time (LRP 1: 53).

6 Dealing with the Past

One might easily fall into the Orientalist pitfall of assuming that Sasrakusuma's exposure to foreign (Calvinist and colonial) worldviews might have caused this rather unusual candid confession of sins, but such a view is not supported by evidence from the LRP. Sasrakusuma seems to have intended his memoir as a part-confessional vehicle rather than concocting a panegyric of an idealized life. The text is imbued with a religious spirit, beginning with (a) *taʿawwudh* and (b) *tasmiya* (or *basmala*):

a. I ask for Allah's protection against the temptation of Satan, the accursed.[22]

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18 LRP 1: 38. Javanese *jina* is derived from Arabic *zinā'* or unlawful sexual intercourse, which counts as a sin (*fāḥisha*) in the Qur'an. Tilman Hannemann (2006: 17) notes that fornication "figures prominently among the most serious sins imaginable in Islamic ethics and puts into question the actual belief of the perpetrator."

19 Sasrakusuma mentioned on the previous page (LRP 1: 37) that he was circumcised at the age of fifteen.

20 The term *jinabat* is an Islamic technical term (Arabic *janāba* or impure state of major pollution). The subsequent ablution is known as *ghusl*, i.e. washing of the whole of the body, which is obligatory before performing the ritual daily prayer.

21 Although some Islamic jurists have permitted masturbation to prevent *zinā'*, this is not a commonly accepted view. In the Shāfiʿī law school, which is the most prevalent in Indonesia, masturbation is regarded as forbidden, see Inhorn (2012: 167ff.) for Islamic discourses on semen and masturbation. For Javanese ideas on "the spilt seed," see Headley 2000.

22 LRP 1: 1: *a. Kawula nyuwun panglindhungan ing Allah saking panggodaning Setan ingkang rinanjam*. The use of the Arabic phrase *aʿudhu biʾllahi min* … ("I take refuge with God against …") is known as *taʿawwudh* or *istiʿādha* ("seeking refuge") and is well attested

b. With the name of Allah, who is merciful in this world and compassionate in the hereafter.[23]

Thereupon the text proceeds with a "notification" (*pengĕt*), mentioning the exact date of the text's beginning (see above) and stating that it was written at the request of his oldest child Raden Sasrasuganda, teacher of Malay in Magelang (also already mentioned above on the cover page). The beginning of the writing endeavor took place in the context of a night-time session of intense pondering and reflecting, accompanied by repetitive formulas for recollecting God's presence (*dhikr*) and the utterance of several prayers.[24] Sasrakusuma even asks Allah for a plenary indulgence, namely "for all the sins which I have committed, and for those I am committing, and for those I have not yet committed."[25] This beginning has a distinctly Sufi flavor, and the following statement seems to point to the wish of writing a confessional account by someone who wanted to come clean:

> At the time of writing this document, it is with a pure heart, as I do not feel like a five-year-old child anymore, because I feel that I am covered in great sins with a dirty life-story.[26]

The reference to the age of five has probably to do with Sasrakusuma's perceived earliest stage of mental awareness: his first recollections start at this age, with fond memories of his mother who taught him to recite the Qur'an, and although her pronunciation was "not quite right" (*olehe ngĕcapake* (*kĕcap*) *ĕmbok kurang bĕnĕre*), her lessons "planted the seed for the fear of Allah" (*dadi wiwinihing aku bisa wĕdi marang Gusti Allah*), but Sasrakusuma admits that evil still entered his heart, so that he committed many sins, for which he asked forgiveness from Allah (LRP 1: 4–5).

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in the Qur'an. Sasrakusuma also uses this term in the second volume of his LRP (2: 1), namely *taawud*.

23 LRP I, p. 1: *b. Kaliyan nama Allah, ingkang mirah ing donya sarta asih ing akerat*. This is the *basmala*, with which it is common to begin a writing. The first words (*kaliyan nama Allah*) are a literal translation of Arabic *bi'smillāh*. Sasrakusuma also uses this term in the second volume of his LRP (2: 1), namely *Bismillah*.

24 As Nancy Florida points out, the evening/night period is common for spiritual exercises in Java, with the practical benefits of coolness and no disturbance (personal communication).

25 LRP 1: 1–2: *Gusti Allah, mugi-mugi Gus-* [*p.2*] *ti Allah angapuntĕn sakathahing dosa kawula ingkang sampun kalampahan saha ingkang sawĕg kalampahan, saha ingkang dereng kalampahan*. Also in the other parts of the LRP (with slight variations).

26 LRP 1: 1: *Kalane anganggit layang iki, kalawan rĕsiking ati, sarta wus ora rumangsa umur limang taun maneh, awit saka rumangsa kelimputan dosa gĕdhe sarta rĕgĕding lalakon*.

After the introductory meditative procedures in 1901 (LRP 1: 1–3), Sasrakusuma proceeds with anecdotes from his earliest memories, youth, and the student period as teacher trainee in the Western system but also as *santri* until the age of approximately sixteen (LRP 1: 3–38). This first part ends rather abruptly, and the thread of the story is picked up from page 39 onwards. Apparently, there was quite some interval of time, because Sasrakusuma explained that he had taken up his pen again in 1904, at the age of 56 (LRP 1: 39). The account (LRP 1: 39–80) continues in the same narrative style, telling anecdotes from his life as a sequence of events, including the student years, family life (marriage and children), earliest writing experiences (in the early 1870s, LRP 1: 54ff., see above), contacts with such Dutch colonial administrators as van der Chijs (*Tuwan Sĕpektur Pan der Ses*, LRP 1: 62) and others, contacts with Surana, who was the editor of the Javanese newspaper *Jurumartani*, and illness and treatment by a Dutch doctor.[27]

The narrative flow is interrupted on page 80 with the heading *carita sĕsĕlan* (inserted story), providing the information that "my second writing" (*panulisku kang kapindho*) was finished on May 30, 1904, when he went to bed in the evening, waking up at five o'clock on the next day to continue his story. He also notes in the "inserted story" that (in May 1904) he had accumulated quite some debts, fl. 1,039 all told, with an extra debt of fl. 450 of the life insurance (*Levensverzekering*). Thereupon the story continues with anecdotes of his life as teacher, contacts and cooperation with Dutch officials for native education, family life, examination, and subsequent appointment as school superintendent (*mantri guru*) in Madiun. Financial worries continued to plague him, which drove him to his writing desk in pursuit of royalties (LRP 1: 86).

The third writing session, which was begun on May 30, 1904, is much concerned with monetary matters, including a flashback of poverty during the years as teacher-trainee in Purwadadi, while having to care for a family at the same time (LRP 1: 93). Reflecting on his life in those years as an "idle good-for-nothing," Sasrakusuma recalls that he often tearfully remembered Allah, imploring his offspring to always be faithful and fearful of Allah (LRP 1: 96). When his 28-days-old baby died, followed by the death of his wife a little later, Sasrakusuma's debts increased even more. His printed mourning card consisted of two stanzas in the verse form *dhandhanggula*, beginning with the following poetic lines (LRP 1: 97):

27 Jacobus Anne van der Chijs (1831–1905) was the first colonial Inspector of Native Education in the Dutch East Indies, who started his job in 1864, see Anonymous 1917b: 490; Brugmans 1938: 154ff. Surana, or in the older orthography (Raden Mas) Soerono, went to the Netherlands in 1874, which is mentioned in LRP (1: 74). However, Surana could not stand the Dutch climate and had to return to Java rather quickly (Dijk 1986: 17).

Raosing tyas lir rinujit-rujit	The heart feels like it is deeply cut,
luluh leleh anglĕs kasulayah	completely destroyed, feeling profoundly sorrowful, devastated

It is a telling sign, I think, that Sasrakusuma chose to use tĕmbang in this context for his expression of sadness. However, he does not want to dwell on his feelings after the death of his wife, "because everyone probably knows [about such feelings]" (*sabab saběn wong kira-kira bisa nimbang*, LRP 1: 98). Sasrakusuma tells that his wife's death affected him greatly, but rather quickly he elevated his domestic help Sujiněm to his concubine or unofficial wife (*bojo paminggir*). In a rather blunt way (or at least so in my opinion), he provided ten practical reasons for this, among others mentioning that she already lived with him and his family under the same roof, was liked by his children, and only cost little (LRP 1: 99). In connection with a birth within the family, which coincided with the "downfall of His Highness Bratadiningrat" (*ambruke Kangjĕng Bratadiningrat*, LRP 1: 100), Sasrakusuma briefly touches upon a notorious incident in the Madiun Residency, involving the power struggle between Bratadiningrat (*Bupati* or Regent in Madiun between 1885 and 1900) and the Dutch *Resident* (the highest form of colonial regional official) Johan Donner, which culminated in the forced resignation of Bratadiningrat (Ong Hok Ham 1978).[28] This part is closed with a pious thought on the omnipotence of Allah, and once more with an account of monetary matters involving details on debts and earnings (LRP 1: 101). Apparently, it crossed his mind that he still had some anecdotes to add, resulting in three "additions" (*wuwuhan*) with supplementary information and afterthoughts (LRP 1: 101–02, 102–04, 104–05).

7 Chronicling the Early Twentieth Century

A brief look at the structure of the LRP may show that it was very much a work in progress, to which Sasrakusuma kept adding on to at several intervals. The entire work consists of four parts, which are all brought formally to a close by the word *tamat* or "end" (1: 1–105; 2: 1–43; 3: 3, 5–22; 4: 1–19). The final page (LRP 4: 20) contains a short "declaration" (*katĕrangan*) concerning the printing process (see above). Part I was a folder of memories from the beginning

28 The "Brotodiningrat Affair" (called *prakara Bratadiningratan* in LRP 2: 35) would later occupy Sasrakusuma much more personally, when one of his children had married into the Bratadiningrat family, see LRP 2: 35ff. On February 1, 1903, it became known that *Residhen Dhoněr* would resign, but all these bureaucratic problems caused Sasrakusuma to alter the date for the wedding of his child which had been planned for the month of Bĕsar, which coincided with March 1903 (LRP 2: 37).

of Sasrakusuma's life to the turn of the century, whereas the other parts are substantially shorter and chronicle the early 1900s with occasional flashbacks.

Although the word *tamat* (LRP 1: 105) indicates that the story was finished, Sasrakusuma continued his work with a "second LRP" (*Layang Ragapasaja kang kapindho*), which was begun on May 7, 1902. The procedure is the same as in the preceding part, namely beginning with a Sufi meditation and concentration session involving prayers and breathing practices (LRP 2: 1–3). The story begins with giving thanks to Allah for granting the possibility to continue the LRP, which might not have been finished "on account of my many sins" (*awit saka kehing dosaku*, LRP 2: 4). The design of the second volume of the LRP is rather different than the preceding work. Whereas the first volume is a retrospective of the period 1848–1901, which only occasionally provides dates for the events, the story of the second volume proceeds in a chronicle-like fashion, reporting at quite some length what happened on certain dates. The account reads like rather detailed entries in a diary, which generally only provides the dates of the Western calendar. The main topics of the second part are the weddings of two of his children and a persistent skin disease.

Financial worries continued to haunt Sasrakusuma, and at times his account resembles a housekeeping book. It even includes a rather long list of names and the sums of money which each of them provided when he married off one his children (LRP 2: 24–27). His own health problems and those of family members, which form another continuing thread of the LRP, are also addressed at large in the second part, even in quite some detail. Sasrakusuma's candor, which is a key characteristic of his LRP, makes no exception for an uncomfortable skin disease. Normally, and not just in Javanese culture, such most intimate details as financial difficulties and ailments are a source of shame, and certainly not the things one will disclose to everyone, strongly suggesting that the LRP was intended for the family archive and not for public view. At this time, which was in April 1902, the members of his household fell ill in large numbers, and the debts crawled steadily upwards to 1,050 guilders (LRP 2: 22). Readers who have come this far will not be surprised that Sasrakusuma felt that all of this was the result of Allah's judgement on his many sins (LRP 2: 23).

The last dated entry of the second volume is April 6, 1903, noting that "it is told that Resident Donner will resign his job" (*Residhen Donnĕr kacarita tanggal 6 April 1903 bakal seleh pandamĕlan*, LRP 2: 39), but apparently the whole Bratadiningrat Affair caused him to write an "addition" (*wuwuhan*) on the topic (LRP 2: 40–43), before the word *tamat* brought the story formally to an end. However, Sasrakusuma later still revisited his text, e.g. adding a footnote from September 1906 (LRP 2: 28).

As it turns out, Sasrakusuma had still more to say, writing a third LRP (*Layang Ragapasaja kang katĕlu*), starting with the concise explanation that the same prayers applied as at the beginning of the LRP 1 and 2 (LRP 3: 3). The third volume concerns "oddities" or strange happenings (*aneh-anehan*). The first of these occurred on March 20, 1903 or 21 Bĕsar 1832 around half past two in the afternoon, when he was woken up from his siesta by an unknown woman, who was allegedly sent by the Prophet Muhammad to convey the latter's blessing upon him (LRP 3: 6). Apparently, this peculiar incident made Sasrakusuma reflect upon earlier "oddities" because he subsequently continues with subsections about five other strange events, two of them from around the 1880s, while the three more recent ones are from the years 1901–03.

The rather short second section of the third volume (LRP 3: 13) concerns "what happened at home" (*Kang kalakon ana ing ngomah*), but only provides information of March 9, 1903/9 Bĕsar 1832 and May 12, 1903/14 Sapar 1833 concerning Sasrakusuma's two daughters. The third section is about "the wedding of Suryatin" (*Dhaupe Suryatin*), i.e., the wedding of his son Suryatin with Raden Ajĕng Salasiyah on Saturday, 29 Rabingulakir 1833 or July 25, 1903 (LRP 3: 13–16), which is rather detailed, including among others a song (*unen-unen*) in the verse form *kinanthi*, and long lists of all the local (Javanese) notables who accompanied the bridal couple in their carriages. The fourth section discusses Sasrakusuma's relationship with Sujiněm, paying special attention to the interpretation of dreams (LRP 3: 16–18).

Sasrakusuma "interrupted" (*nyĕlani*) his account with a poem on "admonitions for daughters" (*pitutur marang anak wadon*), cast in the verse form *asmarandana* (28 stanzas; LRP 3: 18–20). Not surprisingly perhaps, the contents are thoroughly traditional: such a line as "woman is man's servant, without power and rights" (*wadon dasihing wong lanang / nora duwe wĕwĕnang*, stanza 2, LRP 3: 18) pretty much sums up what Sasrakusuma wanted girls to know about their place and role in the world. The final section (LRP 3: 21–22), which was written on August 12, 1903, deals with Sasrakusuma's persistent tightness of the chest and coughing, which plagued him for weeks until a certain health potion finally presented a solution. The word *tamat* brings the volume formally to an end.

The fourth and final volume of Sasrakusuma's work (*Layang Ragapasaja kang kaping IV*) follows the by now usual format, beginning with prayers, but substantially more than in the preceding volumes (pp. 2–4). Sasrakusuma picks up the thread of his story in August 1903, beginning with a letter by Suryatin dated August 7, 1903 (LRP 4: 5), followed by a second section which contains a rather extensive summary of a letter by Kangmas Purwadikrama

of 17 August 17, 1903 (LRP 4: 5–8; with reference to LRP 3 about a trip made to Pranaraga by Sujiněm). The ever-present problem of financial troubles is the topic of the third section (LRP 4: 8–9), after which Sasrakusuma returns his narrative attention to Sujiněm, who had returned to Pranaraga, and her interest in esoteric knowledge (LRP 4: 9–11). In October 1903, Sasrakusuma dreamed that he received a beautiful and expensive dove as a gift, which he interpreted as a bad omen, "since whoever has this bird, [will have] a lot of bad luck, experience damage, or die soon" (*dadi sapa kang kanggonan ma*[*n*]*uk mau, akeh cilakane, aněmahi karusakan, utawa enggal mati*, LRP 4: 11). This dream upset Sasrakusuma very much, closing this section with "I don't know what will happen, only Allah knows" (*Dene kadadeyane ěmbuh, mung Allah kang ngawuningani*, LRP 4: 11).

Not long afterwards, Sujiněm got pregnant (again), and the fifth section is entitled "The birth of Damarwan" (*Laire Damarwan*; LRP 4: 11–14). Its date is most meticulously recorded, namely 18 Mulud 1834 of the year Jimakir (of the eight-year cycle), Anno Hegirae (*Ijrah*) 1332, half past eight in the morning, on Thursday Kaliwon, June 2, 1904, in the *mangsa* Sadha, on Tungle (the first day of the six-day week), in the *windu* Sancaya (LRP 4: 11). Possible implications of this date for his son's future are not discussed, and Sasrakusuma devotes this section almost entirely to his enormous financial difficulties. The sixth section takes us back to the year 1886, when his first wife was still alive (LRP 4: 14–17), whereas the seventh section is an "admonition" (*pitutur*) for his first-born grandson called Suratin, who was six-and-a-half years old at the time (LRP 4: 17). Sasrakusuma comments that this "teaching" (*wuwulang*) was intended for all his (future) grandchildren when they had reached the same age. It is a relatively short poem (nine stanzas) in the verse form *kinanthi*, lecturing young children to be well-behaved. Although the poem merely has a total of 205 words, the negative imperative *aja* ("don't") is used no less than 22 times.

The eighth and final section (LRP 4: 17–19) is simply entitled "To be used as end of this volume" (*Kaanggo wěkasane jilidan iki*) and brings the life-story of Sasrakusuma full circle, returning to his earliest childhood, when he was a "boy out of line" (*bocah bubrah*, LRP 4: 17). He had been a gambler and womanizer, committing great sins. However, Allah always kept reminding him of his obligations and responsibilities.[29] It was only at the age of 31 years, when he became *mantri guru* in Madiun, that he began to reflect on his bad behavior.

29 Sasrakusuma writes that "thanks to Allah's help, I was always given remembrances" (*saka pitulunging Allah aku tansah kaparingan eling*; LRP 4: 18). About the important idea of *eling* (to remember, bear in mind), see Quinn (1992: 111–21), who provides an excellent

At the age of 32 or 33 years, he finally understood that it was "Allah's Will" (*karsaning Allah*) to serve in school. The story closes with an expression of thanks to Allah, but the final sentence is reserved for the "Honorable Government" (*Kangjěng Gupěrmen*), for providing money for writing books, so that he had been better off than all his siblings.[30] The word *tamat* formally indicated that the book was completed.

8 The Question of Genre: What Is It That We Are Studying?

What is the meaning of life? A closer look at the concept of "life-story" may give us an idea of the horizon of expectation of a Javanese audience. On the cover or title page (Figure 10. 1), Sasrakusuma announced that his LRP was about *lalakone Raden Sasrakusuma*, which I translated (above) as "the biography of Raden Sasrakusuma." However, as Benedict Anderson (1990: 247) already observed, the crucial word *lělakon* is "notoriously impossible to translate," "something like a mixture of 'destiny,' 'role,' 'life aim,' and 'moral responsibility'." The verbal derivation *nglakoni* means "1 to endure difficulties voluntarily; 2 to undergo, endure" (Robson and Wibisono 2002: 419), while Quinn (1992: 292) glosses *lělakon* as an "unusually trying or testing experience, something that one 'goes through.'" In 1917, Sasrakusuma would publish his story of Joseph under the title of *Carita Lělampahane Nabi Yusup*, which I translated (above) as "The Life-story of the Prophet Joseph," but another possible interpretation could be "The Story of the Trial and Tribulations of the Prophet Joseph." The rather broad semantic field of the word *lělakon* (or *lělampahan* in *krama*) lends the idea of life histories a deeper religious meaning, commensurate with the overarching Islamic belief that "everything that happens is the product of the divine decree," in which each life has to go through "divine testing" (Wieringa 2010: 319).

The lělakon of Sasrakusuma espouses an extreme God-centered view, believing that everything depends on all-knowing and all-mighty Allah. Reflecting on his personal life, Sasrakusuma does what teachers do for a living, namely teach, which he considered as his calling in life. The moral of the story about the importance of leading a life in accordance with God's purpose is basically the same as both in his story of Joseph and his Old Fairy Tale, all written at an

discussion about moral transgressions as "forgetting" (*lali*) and the (sudden) switch to "a state of moral equanimity and responsibility (*eling*)."

30 About the "unquestioning loyalty" among the priyayi, who after all were hand in glove with the Dutch colonial authorities, see Ricklefs 2007: 151–52.

already advanced age when the prospect of death habitually generates introspection, namely about a lifelong struggle between good and evil.[31] Apparently, the LRP was not vanity publishing: there is no indication that it was for sale, and it seems to have been intended as a private legacy for the family, attempting to shepherd his descendants into good behavior.

How to shelve Sasrakusuma's life history in a virtual library of Javanese writings? The answer to this depends on the answer to another question: what would our organizing principle be? Furthermore, there is the caveat that our ideas might not necessarily be the same as those of a contemporaneous Javanese bibliophile who put his library in order. If the 1948 catalogue of a Javanese gentleman studied by Ben Arps is any guide, biographies would count among the category of "histories, genealogies-pedigrees" (*babad, sajarah-asalsilah*) (Arps 1999: 466). However, other ways of categorization are also possible. For example, the LRP is classified under "PW" in the catalogue of Behrend and Pudjiastuti (1997a and 1997b), which stands for *Piwulang*, *Suluk*, and didactic texts. The "idea of moral edification and religious instruction" (Partin 1956: 303), which is common for the genre of (auto)biography in many literatures, obviously applies here. As the historian Robert Partin (1956: 303) reminds us, "From the days of Plutarch (46–120) to the days of Lytton Strachey (1880–1932) almost all biography was written either for the purpose of making men 'in love with virtue,' or to point out to them 'the hateful and horrid consequences of vice.'" Sasrakusuma's LRP harps on this theme more than on any other. Partin's article is entitled "Biography as an instrument of moral instruction" (Parkin 1956), which could equally well serve as a title for the present chapter.

When Pigeaud first categorized the LRP in the 1930s, he put it away under a most general unifier, namely "Notes on Javanese Literature and Culture," together with a motley collection of most diverse texts (Pigeaud 1970: 143–49). Under his collection of "A" or *Aantekeeningen* (Notes), Pigeaud seems to have shelved as many of his books as he could, but in my opinion it is consequently barely distinguishable from the "not organized" or "dustbin" category. Many years later, when Pigeaud had to catalogue Kraemer's copy of the LRP, he categorized it into "Part Two" of his synopsis of Javanese literature under "History and Mythology" (Pigeaud 1967), into the section "Historical Literature of the Inland Kingdoms of Central Java: the Dynasty of Mataram" under "Biographies."

31 Sasrakusuma repeatedly gives thanks to Allah for not having punished him with death for his many transgressions. At the beginning of LRP 2 (4), Sasrakusuma already mentions that he had feared that death because of God's wrath would leave the first part unfinished.

What about other Javas away from Leiden? We have seen that Pigeaud (1967: 171) regarded Javanese biographies as "alien to the spirit of Javanese literature," but a look beyond Leiden, preferably shifting our angle of vision to Java, may show that none other than the grand vizier (*patih*) of the royal court of Surakarta, namely Raden Adipati Sasradiningrat IV (1847–1925) "left behind an autobiographical manuscript that details his life in Surakarta during these years of rapid change" (Florida 2012: 22). Called *Dhirilaksita* (translated by Florida 2012: 22 as "Narrative of the Self"), it covers his life from birth up to the years preceding his promotion to the position of patih of Surakarta (in office 1890–1916). It is noteworthy that its title already suggests that it is a "Biography as an instrument of moral instruction." The Sanskrit-derived literary component *laksita* denotes "behavior; rule of life" (Robson and Wibisono 2002: 419), which is glossed as *laku* and *kalakuan* (Gericke and Roorda 1901, 2:111; Poerwadarminta 1939: 257). The Javanese lexicographer Poerwadarminta (1930: 340) provides the same glosses, but additionally explains it as *tindak* ("what s.o. does; actions, conduct"; Robson and Wibisono 2002: 748) and as *pitutur* ("1 (words of) advice; 2 admonition, caution"; Robson and Wibisono 2002: 575).

Hitherto unstudied, the *Dhirilaksita* only came to the light of day after it appeared in the catalogue of Girardet et al. (1983: 448–49), but its description as a "chronicle beginning with K.R.A. Sasranagara and ending with K.R.A. Sasradiningrat IV who died on 28 June 1925 and was buried at Imagiri" did not immediately make clear that it belonged to the genre of Javanese biographies. It was Nancy K. Florida who for the first time pointed to this particular aspect, providing much more information about its contents, by describing it in her catalogue of the manuscript collection of the Radya Pustaka Museum in Solo (Florida 2012: 79–80), putting it in the category of "History: 19th century Java." The text is written in the third person and its only witness seems to be this unicum manuscript, which is dated August 14, 1954.

How unique was the writing about selves in Java? Much depends on what we think we know. For example, Martin van Bruinessen (1987: 376) praises Ann Kumar's 1985 publication on the "diary of a Javanese Muslim" for "finding and making available this *unique* material" (emphasis added). This concerns a text, which features as "Wanderings of Soma Rĕja" among the few examples that Pigeaud could find of "Javanese Biographies" (Pigeaud 1967: 172), described by Pigeaud (1968: 393) as a travelogue from the 1880s. It is kept in LUL under call number Cod. Or. 6553, once belonging to the Dutch colonial bureaucrat-scholar Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1870–1929). Furthermore, Pigeaud (1980: 245) describes a manuscript of the KITLV manuscript collection in Leiden (KITLV Or 409), which is "*unique* in providing information on

the origin and rise of a family of Chinese business people in Central Java in the nineteenth century" (emphasis added). This voluminous nineteenth-century family document with years and dates (according to the European calendar), cast in tĕmbang, only entered the public domain when it was purchased in 1970 from a Chinese gentleman of Semarang and was subsequently moved to Leiden through the intermediary of H.J. de Graaf (1899–1984), the noted Dutch historian specializing in Javanese history (Pigeaud 1980: 242–45). It is only rather recently that this text has come under the scrutiny of Javanologists.[32] Apparently, this Sino-Javanese narrative poem, which has the rich merchant Ko Ho Sing (1826–90) as its central protagonist, shares some elements with the life histories of Sasradiningrat IV and Sasrakusuma, despite all kinds of differences.

How does this relate to our categorization of presumed "unique" texts? Are such terms as "modern" and "literature" suitable in the "unique" cases of Sasrakusuma, Sasradiningrat IV, and Ko Ho Sing? As Mana Kia (2020: 22) has remarked of writings commemorating Persianate selves, "recording what happened is only one concern of commemorative texts," pointing out that "Memorializing had moral benefits, whether as warning (*ʿibrat*) or as celebration of worthy example." While Javanology is still in a rather preliminary phase of unearthing primary material, the relatively new field of Memory Studies may help in broadening the conceptual and contextual horizons beyond Java.

How do we define "biography" and is it even suitable for our analysis? Other contributions in this volume invite us to rethink and problematize this term with all its Western connotations, including the tenacious idea that "biography" is a Western-derived genre and hence a foreign imported idea in Java. As Ronit Ricci's chapter in this volume makes clear, the Tales of the Prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*) were highly popular in nineteenth-century Java, providing exemplary biographies and primarily valued for their moral teachings. Sasrakusuma adapted the story of the Prophet Joseph, which not only further underscores the popularity and importance of the prophetic biographies, but his adaptation should also make us reconsider hitherto unrecognized influences upon Javanese biographical representation. Furthermore, the *Nitik* texts studied by Els Bogaerts in this volume as a "biography" of Sultan Agung could also be brought into the fold. As Mana Kia (2020: 21) argues, rather than studying commemorative texts within the narrow confines of "biography and history" with Western and modern biases, we are dealing with a group of texts, often

32 Willem van der Molen is working on its translation, see his blog (http://www.willemvandermolen.nl/) for more background information.

intertextually related, which is much broader and includes histories, travel narratives, (auto)biographies, and so on, all broadly commemorative.

Who knows what other "lucky finds" one could make in other not-yet-catalogued collections, especially in private collections unbeknown to all but a few people? Each and every life is unique, but was Javanese writing about selves that unusual as has been assumed previously? What might be the implications of finding comparable additional works? How could we possibly find out? To work, then.

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Glossary

adĕgan the scene of a shadow-puppet play.

adipati king, ruler, crown prince, regional overlord.

aksara written letter of the Javanese alphabet.

al-Ghazālī medieval Islamic theologian (1058–1111) and one of the most influential thinkers in Islamic history. In Javanese Islam, he is best known for his moderate or sharīʿa-minded Sufism.

Ambiya (A. *anbiyāʾ*) "prophets," in Java referring to the "Tales of the Prophets," a genre depicting the lives of the prophets of Islam, typically from Adam to Muhammad.

Amir Hamza Arabic hero of an epic (originating from Persian via Malay) recounted in Javanese texts, oral tale-telling, puppetry, and dance. The historical Amir Hamza was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. In Javanese the hero (and the genre) is often called *Menak* "the Nobleman."

babad categorical name in Javanese for chronicles.

Babad Tanah Jawi "The Chronicle of Java," a narrative poem describing the history of Java, which begins with Adam and continues until the mid-eighteenth century. The so-called "Major Babad," consisting of over 9,000 pages in manuscript, was inscribed, at Dutch instigation, at the court of Surakarta in 1836.

Baratayuda "battle of the descendants of Barata," that is, the Pandawas and their cousins the Korawas. It refers to the Great War which ends the conflict at the heart of the Mahabarata. The Mahabarata is one of the two major Indian epics (the other being the Ramayana). In Java, *Baratayuda* is also the name of a poem in Old Javanese about that battle, written in 1157.

Batavian Society of the Arts and Sciences a learned society founded in 1778 in Batavia (today's Jakarta).

Blambangan the name of an ancient kingdom at the eastern end of Java, rival of Majapahit. Its king was defeated by Damar Wulan.

Cĕnthini An "encyclopedic" narrative poem of epic dimensions (247,766 lines of poetry in 722 cantos). Composed by a group of court poets in 1815 at the Palace of Surakarta (Karaton Surakarta), it is a (if not *the*) recognized classic of Javanese literature.

ciblon one of the drums in a gamelan ensemble, which is played rapidly and expressively in the later sections of a multi-sectional musical composition (*gĕndhing*).

Damar Wulan the eponymous hero of a Javanese romance from East Java, dating from the sixteenth century.

dangdut a popular Indonesian musical genre that was created from a mixture of Indian (Bollywood), Malay and Arabic musical forms.

Demak the first Islamic kingdom in Java.

dhalang puppeteer or storyteller.

dhāt substance or essence, especially God's essence.

dhulĕng a performance genre, consisting of singing (recitation of *suluk*) while dancing.

discourse the literary means by which the story in a narrative is expressed and structured.

emprak performers of an acrobatic fire dance; sometimes synonymous with *dhulĕng*.

gambang the wooden xylophone of a gamelan ensemble.

gambir a climbing shrub, the leaves of which are chewed together with betel nut and other ingredients in social situations or for personal relaxation. *Gambir* leaves are a sedative.

gambyong/gambyung a female dance form; according to nineteenth-century Javanese sources, *gambyong* evolved out of a rustic (Islamic) form. In contemporary Java, it is found in both popular and "high-culture" forms.

gamelan a Javanese ensemble of musical instruments consisting of metallophones, gongs, drums, wooden flutes, xylophones, zithers, and a two-string bowed fiddle.

garis pangiwa (from the root *kiwa*, left) the left dynastic line follows the genealogy of the Hindu-Buddhist deities and their descendants, beginning with the supreme God Bathara Guru or Shiva.

garis panĕngĕn (from the root: *tĕngĕn*, right) the right line of descent follows the Muslim lineage, beginning with the Prophet Muhammad.

gĕndhing a multi-sectional musical composition for gamelan.

gita see *kidung*.

Gusti title for God or a king; Lord.

Hamzah Fansuri (A. Ḥamza Fanṣūrī) a prominent Malay Sufi scholar and poet, active in the sixteenth century, born in Fansur (Barus), in northwest Sumatra, famous in insular Southeast Asia for his use of Malay Sufi poems called *syair* (A. *shiʿr*).

hikayat (Malay, from A. *ḥikāya*) lit. "story, tale." A prose narrative genre in Malay.

Ibn al-ʿArabī medieval Islamic theologian (1165–1240), a controversial but also influential figure best known for his speculative Sufi theology.

kadipaten residence of the crown prince in the principalities of Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

kapir (A. *kāfir*) nonbeliever, infidel.

kasĕkten (from the root *sĕkti*) supernatural power.

kawula servant, subaltern.

kĕntrung/kĕntrungan large frame drum/performance with this frame drum; in contemporary Java, a vanishing form of narrative performance of orally-composed Islamic histories, hagiographies, and legends accompanied by this frame drum.

kiblat/keblat (A. *qibla*) The bodily orientation of the person performing ritual prayer (A. *ṣalāh*) toward the Kaʿba in Mecca.

kidung lit. "song." Sixteenth- to nineteenth-century term for texts in *tĕmbang macapat* and related verse forms, including historical narratives, mystical contemplations, and incantations. Synonym: *gita*.

krama formal register of Javanese.

Kurawa, Pandawa names of the two warring clans in the epic Mahabharata. The stories for a popular form of shadow-puppet theater in Java derive from this ancient Indian poem (see *Baratayuda*).

kyai the leader of a traditional Muslim boarding school, or *pĕsantren*, and the honorific title of that leader.

macapat the most frequently used form of prosody in "classical" Javanese sung poetry. There are about a dozen different commonly-used *macapat* verse forms. Each is governed by a formal structure that determines the number of lines per stanza and syllables per line (*guru wilangan*). Each of these verse forms also has a specific pattern of vowel endings for each of the lines (*guru lagu*). Different melodies, with different moods, are used to recite the different *macapat* verse forms.

Majapahit a great Hindu-Buddhist maritime empire based on the island of Java (1293~c. 1527).

Makassar capital of the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi; in former times (until the mid-seventeenth century) the capital of the Sultanate of Gowa.

makripat (A. *maʿrifa*) knowledge, especially the non-discursive, phenomenological knowledge of the Sufi; gnosis.

maskawin lit. marriage gold; dowry paid by the groom to his bride.

Mataram name of the Central Javanese region which produced the longest and most powerful of modern Javanese dynasties, which lasted from the sixteenth until the mid-eighteenth century.

mukmin (A. *muʾmin*) the faithful.

nabi (A. *nabī*) prophet.

ngabehi an official of middle rank in Javanese court hierarchy.

ngelmu/ngelmi (A. *ʿilm*) spiritual or esoteric knowledge, wisdom.

ngoko informal register of Javanese.

ojrat performance genre for recitation of *suluk*, from the Arabic *ujra* (cause; recompense) or *ḥaḍra* (presence, presencing).

Old Javanese the Javanese used prior to 1500 CE. The oldest evidence is datable to before 800 CE.

Panembahan Senapati the founder of the Mataram kingdom.

Panji tales tales of the hero of that name, prince of a Javanese kingdom, and his fiancée Candrakirana, princess of a neighboring kingdom. She disappears from the palace but the prince succeeds in finding her again, after many adventures. There are many different Panji tales. Long popular, the tales also found expression in various artforms and in other literatures in Southeast Asia.

Pasisir lit. "beach, shore." The northern littoral of Java and, by extension, of other islands around the Java Sea, home to a variety of internationally oriented cultures.

patih title for a prime minister or regional lord.

pegon a modified form of the Arabic script used to write Javanese.

pĕngulu chief religious officer of a district.

pĕsantren traditional Muslim boarding school; place of the *santri*.

piwulang instruction, teachings.

priyayi aristocratic and bureaucratic Javanese elite.

raden title applied to male royal descendants of middle rank.

Raden Patah the first king of Demak, the first Islamic kingdom in Java.

Ramayana title of one of the two Indian epics (the other being the Mahabarata). It tells the story of Rama and his wife Sita. Expelled from the court – lest he threaten the claim to the throne of a younger brother – Rama lives in exile in the wilderness together with his wife and another younger brother. There, Sita is kidnapped by Rawana, king of the demons. Rama manages to set her free with the help of the monkey army. In Java, the Ramayana has been told through dance, literature, theater, puppetry, and sculpture.

rasa polysemic Javanese word, meaning "feeling; taste; flavor; emotion; sense; meaning; thought; speech; voice; mystery; essence" (and, sometimes, "gossip"); key word in Javanese psychology and phenomenology.

rĕbab the two-string bowed fiddle in a gamelan ensemble.

rĕbutan a competitive seizure of food or other items (including the grasping of sexual body parts) by crowds of people during Javanese ritual events.

rod puppetry see *wayang*.

ronggeng professional female or transvestite male-to-female dancer.

Rum the Ottoman Empire.

sadat (A. *shahāda*) the Muslim profession of faith. The reciter bears witness to God's oneness and to Muhammad being His messenger.

sahabat (A. *ṣaḥāba*) a companion of the Prophet.

sahid (A. *shahīd*) a religious martyr.

salah (A. *ṣalāh*) ritual prayer in Islam that Muslims are mandated to perform five times a day.

santri student of the Islamic sciences, pupil of a *kyai*; Islamic boarding school student.

santri lĕlana students of the Islamic sciences who wander (*lĕlana*) throughout Java in search of knowledge.

sarengat (A. *sharīʿa*) Islamic canonical law.

seh (A. *shaykh*) title for a Muslim religious leader or scholar.

sĕjarah genealogy, a genealogical text.

sĕkti to have supernatural power.

sĕrat letter, book; often used in titles, e.g., *Sĕrat Cĕnthini*, *Sĕrat Ambiya*.

shadowplay see *wayang*.

slawatan worship of God and the Prophet Muhammad performed in song, usually accompanied by *tĕrbang*.

Stambul Istanbul.

story the content or chain of events in a narrative.

Sufism Islamic mysticism.

suling the wooden flute in a gamelan ensemble.

sultan royal title, assigned to Sultan Agung by the Grand Sharīf of Mecca in 1641. Since the reign of Hamĕngku Buwana I (1749–1792), all rulers of Yogyakarta have adopted the title of Sultan.

suluk Sufi discipline; name of a genre of "classical" Javanese poetry (Sufi songs) composed in *macapat* verse; related to A. *sulūk* or "pathway" in Sufism.

suluk (2) a genre of songs sung by the puppeteer in *wayang* to set or change a mood. Its lyrics are evocative and often derive from classical poems.

sunan royal title, meaning "he who is revered"; short for *susuhunan* (from the root *suhun*, to hold in great respect; to honour and revere; to hold above one's head). The title was originally a spiritual title for the Islamic saints (*wali*) only. From the eighteenth century, it was exclusively used by the supreme rulers of the Mataram dynasty. Since 1755, the prerogative of the rulers of the Surakarta court.

sunat (A. *sunna*) normative or recommended Islamic practice, congruent with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad.

Syattariyah (A. Shaṭṭāriyya) a Sufi lineage of initiation (A. *ṭarīqa*) that originated in fifteenth-century Persia, often characterized by ecstatic spiritual traditions and speculative Sufi theology.

tauhid (A. *tawḥīd*) the unity of God.

tayuban a dance party in which a *ronggeng* takes turns dancing with paying male guests, alcohol is consumed, and sex between the *ronggeng* and one or more of the guests occurs when the dancing has ended.

tĕmbang Javanese poetic verse form, sung or recited; hence the performative quality of texts written in the *macapat* metres.

tĕrbang/tĕrbangan *rebana* (frame drum) performance with these frame drums.

ulama (A. plural, *ʿulamāʾ*) Muslim religious scholar, often designating a scholar of jurisprudence.

Umma people or community, especially the Muslim community in its entirety.

Wahabism Islamic reform movement founded by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb in eighteenth-century central Arabia, strongly emphasizing monotheism and hence opposed to various Sufi practices; prevalent in Saudi Arabia.

wahdat al-wudjud (A. *waḥdat al-wujūd*) oneness of being/unity of existence. Ibn al-ʿArabī's representative doctrine that since everything in the world is an emanation from Allah, the two are fundamentally the same. In contrast, the Indian theologian and mystic Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) was a leading proponent of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (unity of appearance), asserting Allah's supremacy and that Allah and His creation were not one. Man could only "witness" Allah and experience unity with Him on the mystical path.

wali (A. *walī*, pl. *awliyā'*) saints, friends of God. The men who, according to tradition, introduced and spread Islam on Java. Usually nine walis (*wali sanga*).

wayang lit. "image(s)." Dramatic genres recounting epic stories. Major examples in Java are shadowplay (*wayang kulit*), rod puppetry (*wayang golek*, *wayang thĕngul*, *wayang cĕpak*), human theatre (*wayang wong*), and masked drama (*wayang topeng*). The term *wayang* also refers to the puppets.

wujūd In Islamic speculative theology, *wujūd* is simultaneously God's pure being and the spiritual seeker's finding thereof.

wulu body hair, feather; term for a diacritic written above a consonant so that it is followed by a short "i" sound.

zikir (A. *dhikr*) remembrance (of God); Sufi devotional practice.

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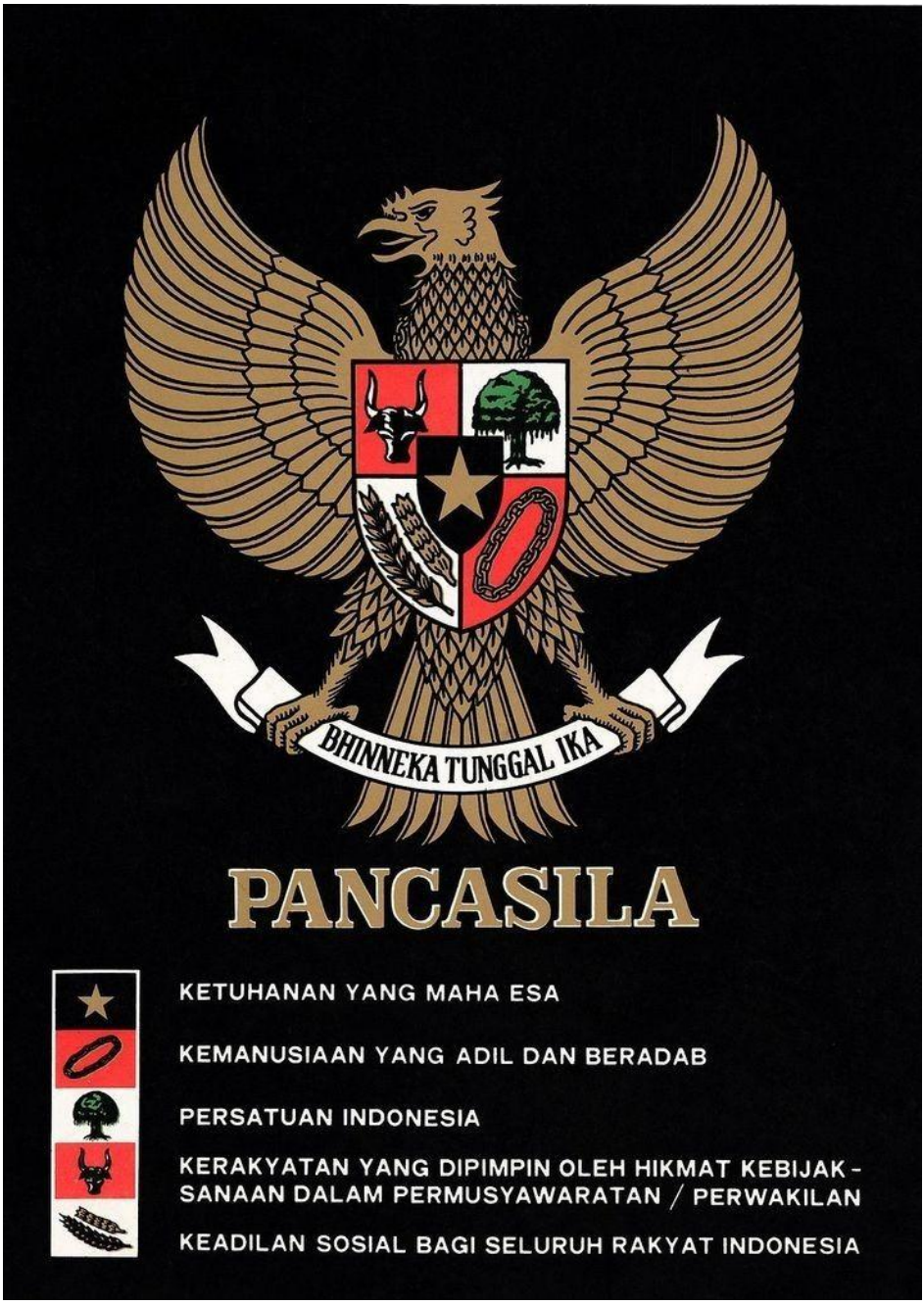
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PANCASILA
KETUHANAN YANG MAHA ESA
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PERSATUAN INDONESIA
KERAKYATAN YANG DIPIMPIN OLEH HIKMAT KEBIJAK-
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Javanese literature is one of the world's richest and most unusual literary traditions yet it is little known today outside of Java, Indonesia, and a handful of western universities. With its more than a millennium of documented history, its complex interactions over the centuries with literature written in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Malay and Dutch, its often symbiotic relationship with the performing arts of puppetry and dance, and its own immense creativity and insight, this vastly understudied literature offers a lens to understanding Java's fascinating world as well as human ingenuity more broadly. The essays in this volume, *Storied Island: New Explorations in Javanese Literature*, take a fresh look at questions and themes pertaining to Java's literature, employing new theoretical and methodological lenses.

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